VIHĀRAS IN ANCIENT INDIA

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A Survey of Buddhist Monasteries

Foreword
HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

DIPAK KUMAR BARUA



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To

My revered teacher
Dr. Anukul Chandra Banerjee, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D.,
Professor and Head of the Dept. of Pāli and Dean,
Faculty of Arts, University of Calcutta,
who has initiated me into
Buddhistic Research and Teaching

THEKCHEN CHOLING
DHARMSALA CANTT.
KANGRA DISTRICT
HIMACHAL PRADESH

FOREWORD

Vihāras have always been a symbol of the strength and spread of Buddhism, reflecting the thought, culture, aspirations and intellectual development of a people. An analytical study of the history of Vihāras is bound to throw a flood of light on the cultural life of the Buddhist environment and the many facets of Buddhism as a spiritual force.

Dr. Dipak Kumar Barua has done a splendid job in presenting this informative book on the subject. As it happens, many of the Vihāras found in Tibet are a prototype of the ones that were in existence in India. I am happy to say that he has rendered a signal service to the cause of Buddhism by bringing out "Vihāras in Ancient India" which, I find, is an immensely enlightening book. Scholars as well as general readers will find this book useful.

THE DALAI LAMA

December 16, 1969.

PREFACE

Vihāras or the Buddhist monasteries in the remote past like the Hindu temples, Jain maṭhas, Christian churches and Muslim mosques became important religious and cultural centres. With their modest inception even during the life-time of Lord Buddha, such monastic establishments grew up in abundance throughout India from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and Cutch to Tipperah revealing some significant architectural peculiarities. Emergence of such a large number of vihāras at a subsequent period was possible due to the primary need for residence of innumerable Buddhist monks and nuns. At a later time, however, these became transformed into educational instiutions and still later as grand monastic universities. Besides, influencing early monachism, these religious settlements also played important roles in the spheres of architecture, education, painting and sculpture. A survey of such Buddhist monasteries may, therefore, highly be appreciated. But the number of books on the subject is very few. The noteworthy publications like "Early Indian Monasteries" of Dr. Bimala Churn Law, "Thoughts, Literature and Monasteries in Earlier Buddhism" of Baiyu Watanabe, "The University of Nalanda" of Dr. Hansmukh Dhirajlal Sankalia, "Ancient Indian Education" of Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji, "Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities" of Sri Phanindranath Bose, "Education in Ancient India" of Dr. A. S. Altekar and "Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India" of Dr. Sukumar Dutt have only incidentally dealt with the subject. Hence a detailed and comprehensive study on the topic is a long desideratum. An attempt has, therefore, been made by me to describe,

as far as practicable, most of the Buddhist monasteries of ancient India, in the present survey which forms the first part of my research-work done in connection with the award of the Premchand Roychand Research Studentship of the University of Calcutta for the year 1963. But it should be noted that remains of the early Buddhist monasteries are still buried under the earth and await for future excavation in an elaborate manner[1]. At the present moment my object has, however, been to bring together the results of the researches made by the previous scholars and to supplement them by a close study of both literary and epigraphic sources. For literary sources particular attention has been paid to the vast field of itineraries, especially of the Chinese Pilgrims like Fa-hien, Hiuen-tsang and I-tsing, and to works of Tāranātha and Bu-tson. Vihāras have been described regionally because of the fact that the readers may get a fair idea about the regional picture of their development. A special endeavour has further been made to trace the excellent collections of books and manuscripts which were deposited in the renowned libraries of those Buddhist monasteries. In our present survey we have also attempted to show that out of a favourable ground fertiled by religious sentiment and urge for learning, these vihāras satisfied the dictum of Carlyle that "a true university is a collection of books."

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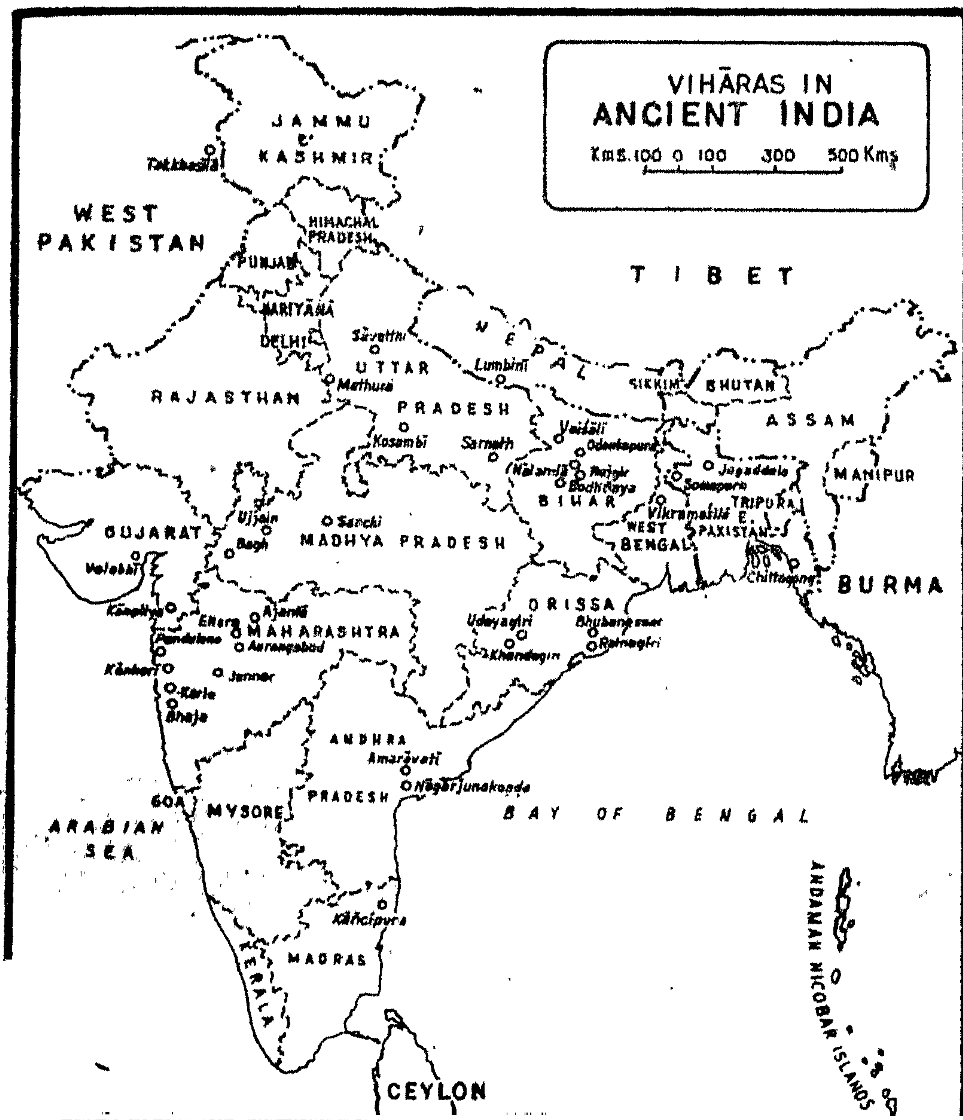
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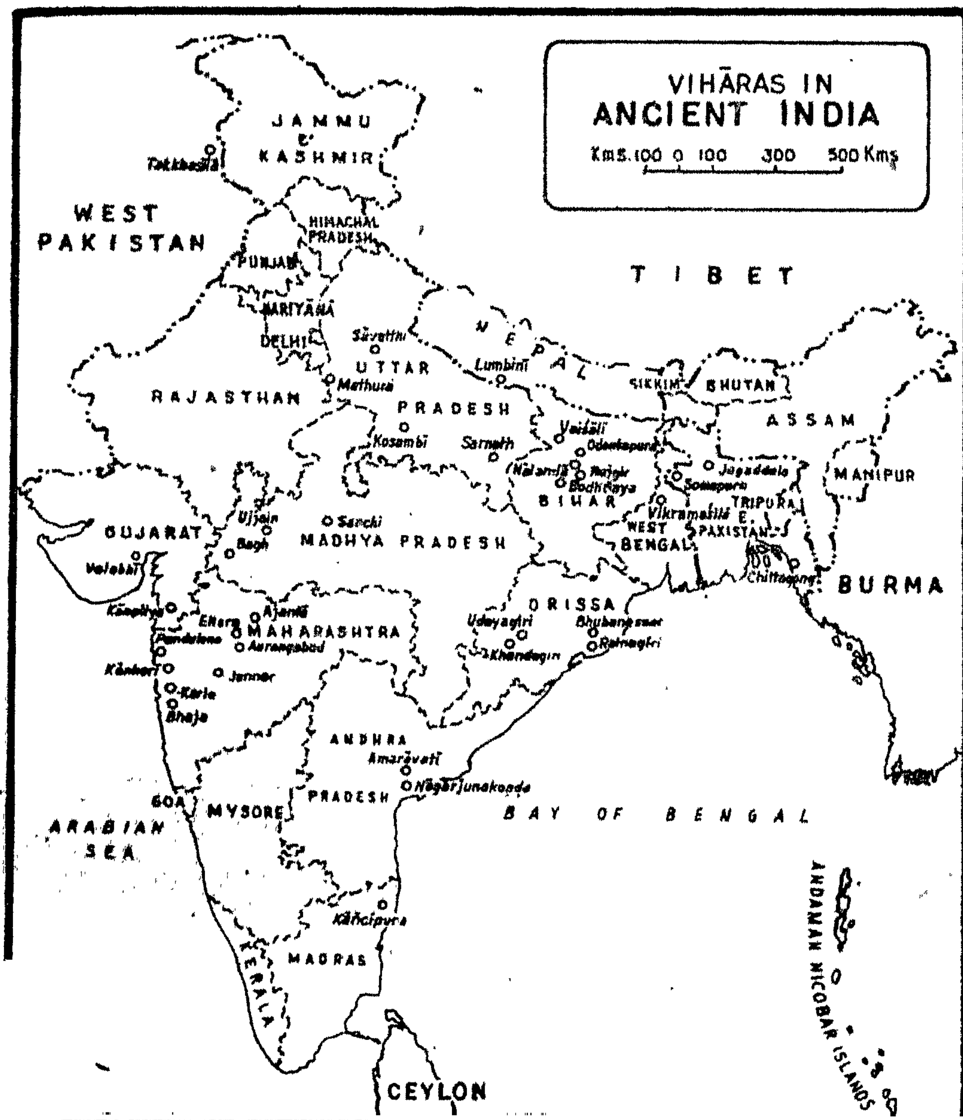
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HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUNJAB
HARIYANA
DELHI
TIBET
NEPAL
SIKKIM
BHUTAN
ASSAM
MANIPUR
RAJASTHAN
UTTAR PRADESH
Mathura
Lumbini
Kosambi
Sarnath
Vaisali
Odantapura
Nalanda
Rajgir
Bodhgaya
BIHAR
Jagaddala
Somapura
Vikramasila
TRIPURA
E. PAKISTAN
WEST BENGAL
Chittagong
BURMA
GUJARAT
Valabhi
Ujjain
Bagh
Sanchi
MADHYA PRADESH
ORISSA
Udayagiri
Khandagiri
Bhubaneswar
Ratnagiri
Ajanta
Ellora
MAHARASHTRA
Aurangabad
Kanheri
Junnar
Karle
Bhaja
ANDHRA PRADESH
Amaravati
Nagarjunakonda
GOA
MYSORE
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
Kancipura
MADRAS
KERALA
CEYLON
ANDAMAN NICOBAR ISLANDS

Map 1


VIHĀRAS IN
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Kms. 100 0 100 300 500 Kms
JAMMU & KASHMIR
WEST PAKISTAN
HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUNJAB
DELHI
TIBET
NEPAL
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Sāvatthi
UTTAR PRADESH
Mathurā
RAJASTHAN
Kosambī
Sarnath
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SIKKIM
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Introduction

VIHĀRA—ITS DEFINITION

In ancient times the Buddhist Monastery—known as 'Vihāra'—played a very important role in Indian life and thought. So before embarking on any discussion on the subject, it seems proper to clarify the meaning of the term 'Vihāra'. Numerous definitions of it are found in the Buddhist literature and in the writings of eminent Indologists. It is interesting to note that all of them deal with different aspects of the Buddhist Vihāra. According to Edgerton the "Vihāra seems based on the meaning dwelling. Dwelling place, especially of a monkish community, monastery".[1] Its Tibetan equivalent is 'Gtsug lag khan' which means "Kuṭāgāra, Vihāra, a monastery, a temple".[2] Vihāra, thus, is a "place of living, stay, abode". It is, more precisely, "a habitation for a Buddhist mendicant, an abode in the forest (Ārāñña), or a hut ; a dwelling, habitation ;

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lodging for a bhikkhu".[3] The Suttanipāta, on the other hand, defines Vihāra as "a remote shelter for a bhikkhu (dūra)".[4] But the term Vihāra is also used in a more restricted sense. It means a place for convention of the bhikkhus ; meeting place ; place for rest and recreation in a garden or park. In Tibetan the term in the "present day most commonly is applied to the chief hall of worship and assembly in any large monastery. In this sense a Tibetan remarked lately to one of the editors : in the congregation hall there are many coloured pictures on the walls".[5] But we have used the term Vihāra in a wider sense to mean "a larger building for housing bhikkhus, an organised monastery".[6] So Vihāra, when properly rendered, means a Buddhist Monastery where the bhikkhus assemble together at least for a certain period. It is a convent for monks and nuns dedicated to religious life.[7] The modern state Bihār may bear its name from the Vihāras.[8] It seems, thus, that the words 'Ārāma' and 'Vihāra' are sometimes synonymous. I.B. Horner translates Ārāma not "as park", but as "Monastery".[9] In Pali, however, the word 'Ārāma' has been used largely in connection with a residence for monks ; hence it signifies a monastery.[10] 'Ārāma' may be defined as a Buddhist convent (vihāra), resthouse for quiet people built "not too far from the town and not too near, convenient for going and for

3. Vinayapiṭaka, ii, p. 207 ; Dīghanikāya, ii, p. 7(P.T.S.) ; Aṅguttaranikāya, iii, pp. 51, 299 (P.T.S.).

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5. Das, S.C. A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Sanskrit synonyms, p. 1002.

6. Vinayapiṭaka, i, p, 58 ; Saṃyuttanikāya, i, p. 185 ; Jātaka, i, p. 126 ; Milinda Pañha, p. 212, Visuddhimagga, p. 292.

7. Everyman's Encyclopaedia (4th ed.), Vol. viii, p.625.

8. Rhys-Davids, T.W. and Stede, William. The Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary, pt. viii (1925 ed), p. 101.

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11. Cullavagga, vi, 4,8,3,10.
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13. Mahāvagga, vi, 23, 1.
14. Horner, I.B. tr. The Book of the Discipline, vol. ii. pp, xlix, 2,
15. Zimmer, Heinrich. The art of Indian Asia, vol. i, p. 246.
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convey only monastery for Buddhist monks and nuns for leading an organised and disciplined life. Like the Caityas, however, the Vihāras or Monasteries resemble very closely the corresponding institutions among the Christians. Vihāra is also regarded as one of the five kinds of Leṇa which means a "monastery proper, not a shifting and seasonal settlement of monks".[19] Childers thought that in later time the word Vihāra "almost always was used to designate the whole of a building where many Bhikkhus resided; in older literature the dwelling place, the private apartments of a single Bhikkhu".[20] Buddhaghosa, on the other hand, took Vihāra as a dwelling place with a chamber in it, well-protected and containing private lodgings.[21] It is to be noted that various buildings constituted a Buddhist saṅghārāma, such as, living and sleeping quarters for the bhikkhus, a refectory or service-hall (upaṭṭhāna-sālā), a fire-hall (aggi-sālā), frequently rendered as 'kitchen', an open pillared pavilion (maṇḍapa), a promenade and cloister for walking exercise (caṅkamana-sālā), a bath-room for hot baths (jantaghara), a Kaṭhina-hall for tailoring, a privy, a well and a well-house (udapānasālā), a store-room (koṭṭhaka), and a provision and drug store (kappiya-kuṭi). The various units of a monastery seem to have been, for the most part, detached structures and thus the saṅghārāma did not consist of one single and comprehensive building.[22]

SCOPE AND STUDY

Numerous passages in the Pāli Canonical texts and

19. Dutt, S. Buddhist monks and monasteries of India, p. 93,

20. Childers. Dictionary of the Pāli language. (See under 'Vihāra').

21. Sāmantapāsādikā (Simon Hewavitarne Bequest Series, Colombo), pp. 568-569 (Vihāro ti antogabbho va aññaṃ va sabhapaticchannaṃ gutta-senāsanaṃ),

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later epigraphical records show that vihāras came into existence in a quite early period. Even during the life-time of Buddha, as we shall see subsequently, these monasteries as dwelling places for the bhikkhus and bhikkhunis were in vogue. An organised community cannot, however, perform its functions well without more or less a permanent place of residence. Thus the seed of later developed and embellished monasteries was sown even during Buddha's days. The history of Buddhist vihāras in India may, therefore, commence from the sixth century B.C. and relates a connected tale of their gradual evolution and ornamentation. The institutions could not have developed further but for the royal munificence, liberal donation from the lay-devotees as also enthusiasm of the monks and nuns for an organised settled life. But unfortunately the glorious accounts of Buddhist vihāras are marred by many sad and dark events; for these establishments were levelled time and again by victorious invaders and could hardly survive for a period. Our study would, however, be confined primarily to the itineraries of the foreign travellers, specially those of the Chinese. In the subsequent pages we shall point out that beginning from the sixth century B.C. the Buddhist vihāras in India had passed through several vicissitudes till the Muslim conquest which checked the smooth flow of monastic activities and 'drove nails into the coffin of these monasteries'. Indeed their existence in India is rarely traceable later than the thirteenth century. Considering, thus, the age and scope, these ancient vihāras deserve much credit as they gradually turned into the institutes of higher learning.

Our dissertation, therefore, begins with the short account of the evolution of vihāras together with a narrative describing the monastic life. In between our discussions an endeavour has also been made from various sources to point out some of the architectural peculiarities that were visible in the early as well as

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much later vihāras. This setting of the stage is followed by the study of monasteries from the geographical as well as chronological standpoints. An attempt has also been made to show how out of a fertile field of culture and education these vihāras emerged and were gradually developed under the patronage of the philanthropic emperors and religious-minded lay people. A fair idea of the monastic affairs, where possible, has also been furnished. Fresh light has been thrown, however, on the excellent collections of books and manuscripts found in these monasteries of hoary India. The scope of study, therefore, is mainly confined to the Buddhist monasteries which had, in course of time, grown up from their rudimentary stage to their full maturity.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For a proper study of the Buddhist monastic system in India we have to depend on other available sources, as historical records are still lacking in this regard. There are, however, two sources from which materials for a comprehensive survey of Buddhist monasteries may be gathered, viz, literary and epigraphical.

The literary sources consist of: (i) Pāli Canonical and Non-Canonical texts, especially the Vinayapiṭaka; Buddhist Sanskrit literature, particularly the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda texts; and (ii) the travelogues written by Chinese Pilgrims like Fa-Hien (A.C. 399-414), Hiuen-Tsang (A.C. 629-645), I-tsing (A.C. 671-695), O-Kung (A.C. 800) and others, who visited India with a religio-educational mission and left for us the records of their personal observations and experiences. Occasionally they supply us with some traditional beliefs that were current in those days and with useful information about the Buddhist monasteries.

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Chapter One

EVOLUTION OF VIHĀRAS

ORIGIN

From the Mahāvagga we learn that just after his enlightement Buddha hesitated to preach his new doctrine to the people, not to speak of forming any Saṅgha. But it was at the request of Brahmā Sahampati that he undertook the task of preaching his Dhamma to the populace. Thus were converted the Pañcavaggiya Bhikkhus[1] and Yasa, Vimala, Subāhu, Pannaji, Gavampati, fifty householder (gihī)-friends of Yasa, the Jaṭilas headed by Uruvela-kassapa, Nadī-kassapa, Gayā-kassapa, and many others belonging to the different strata of of the society to the new religion of Buddha. With the influx of the converts to his Dhamma it became, however, imperative for Buddha to frame rules for the well-being and proper guidance of his adherents. Thus came into existance the Saṅgha which subsequently attained a glorious position in the history of Indian monasticism.[2] But it is to be noted that although the first Saṅgha appeared, yet there was, at that period,

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no Vihāra or Monastery to accommodate the rapidly increasing members of the Buddhist Order. It was prescribed that they should use the residences under trees (rukkhamūla senāsanaṃ). But later this rigid principle was liberalised to some extent and the monks were allowed to spend their days in teaching and preaching, dwelling temporarily in 'āvāsathāgāras' (Mote-halls of villagers) instead of taking shelter in fixed residences. The Bhikkhus, thus, at the primitive stage of the Saṇgha had no dwelling house properly so called. They took shelter "now here, now there—in the woods, at the foot of trees, on hill-sides, in grottoes, in mountain caves, cemeteries, in forests, in open plains, and in heaps of straw".[3] But the climatic conditions of this country stood against such a wandering life. That is why Buddha himself could, in the following years, not remain indifferent to the question of a permanent place of abode for his disciples. From the Mahāvagga we learn that king Bimbisāra of Magadha offered his Veluvana Vihāra to Buddha and his followers, and this was the first Vihāra ever presented to the Saṇgha.[4] While Buddha was sojourning at Rājagaha, he also introduced following the practices prevalent in other religious systems, at the instance of the Bhikkhus, the system of observance of Vassā at a fixed place.[5] He prescribed five kinds of abodes for the monks, viz, Vihāra (Monastery), Addhayoga (Pinnacled house), Pāsāda (Big building), Hammiya (Attic) and Guhā (Cave).[6] The term 'Vihāra' was generally used in the

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4. Mahāvagga, i, 22. 18.

5. De, Gokuldas. Democracy in early Buddhist Saṇgha, p, 19.

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"To meditate and obtain insight in a refuge
and at ease :
A dwelling-place is praised by the Awakened One
as chief gift to an Order.
Therefore a wise man, looking to his own weal,
Should have charming dwelling places built so that
those who have heard much can stay therein."[8]

From the above it is apparent that Buddha realising the hardship of the Bhikkhus during the rains permitted them to reside in the vihāras. During the Vassāvāsa they were "to look after their vihāra, to provide food and water for themselves, to fulfil all due ceremonies,

7. Bhattacharyya. Tarapada. The Canons of Indian Art, or A Study on Vāstuvidyā (Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), pp.64-65.

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such as paying reverence to sacred shrines, etc., and to say loudly once, or twice, or thrice: 'I enter upon Vassā'."[9] Thus in course of time it had become customary for the Buddhist monks to take up Vassā-residence on the day after the full moon of Āṣāḍha (mid-June) or a month later and continue it for three following months.[10] During the Vassā-period the monks may go out of residences under special circumstances for about a week only.[11] Vassāvāsa, according to the Buddhist monks, did not mean to live anywhere and without any companion. It was rather to reside in a congregation. So a provision was made for a residence with its own boundry (sīmā). But several points were considered by the Bhikkhus, before they would decide to settle down at a select place. The most potent one among them was, however, the possibility of getting alms for subsistence and that was why they used to select such places of residences which were neither too far nor too close to the localities. We know that gradually people came forward to donate their own private parks or pleasure-gardens for the use of the monks for dwelling purposes. Subsequently it was seen that there appeared two types of residences for bhikkhus, viz, the Āvāsa in the countryside, built and organised by the monks themselves, and the Ārāma, situated in private enclosures in or near towns and maintained by the donor.[12] But the Āvāsas and Ārāmas, in their earliest stage, 'were in the nature of encampments strickly' limited to the three rainy months.[13] Even though this short congregation there arose a sense of collective life among the monks.

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The Guhā (cave) also played an important role in the evolution of Buddhist monasteries in India. The Bhikkhus preferred the caves as the best places for their residences. These caves were rather artificial structures made of bricks or wood, or hewn out of solid rock. For instance, the caves excavated by Asoka and his grandson Dasaratha, in the Barābar and Nāgārjuni hills at Gayā are the earliest specimens of rock-cut ones. Of the monastic dwellings, however, Vihāra (storied monastery) and Guhā only survived for long. In Northern India the storied monastery, while in Western India the Guha-monastery attained excellent perfection. Thus gradually both Vihāra and Guhā became almost synonymous and convey the congregational settlements of the Buddhist monks and nuns. The Guhā-monasteries, particularly, occupy an interesting place with their architectural peculiarities in the annals of ancient Indian architecture.

CENTRES OF EDUCATION

With a beginning as resorts during the rains, the Buddhist monasteries at the next stage turned into great centres of learning. The account of such a transition from residences to seats of learning is a remarkable one in the history of Buddhism in India. Undoubtedly such a process of transformation was rather slow, but it was steady. The growth of vihāras as educational centres may also be noticed in the following passage from the Manorathapūranī : "Even if there be a hundred or a

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thousand bhikkhus practising vipassanā (meditation), there will be no realization of the Noble Path if there is no learning (doctrine, pariyatti)".[18] The same idea is also reflected in other text : "There may or may not be realization (paṭivedho) and practice (paṭipatti) ; learning is enough for the perpetuation of the Sāsana. The wise one, having heard the three Piṭakas, will fulfil even both···. Therefore, the Sāsana (religion) is stabilized when learning endures".[19] The value of learning was, thus, greatly felt. "Hence, all able and intellectual monks took to learning, and the idea that learning was of greater importance than practice and realization was more firmly established".[20] Thus a new term, viz, Gantha-dhura or the vocation of "book", was added to the Pāli terminology. As a result, bhikkhus engaged themselves chiefly to study.[21] Originally, however, Gantha-dhura implied the learning and teaching of the Paṭakas. But gradually its connotation was widened to include languages, grammar, history, logic, medicine and other branches of learning. Thus, in course of time, the Buddhist monasteries had to make room for secular learning in addition to mere ecclesiastical teching and religious preaching. The Bhikkhus also became psychologically prepared to study the doctrines of other faiths as well as some secular subjects. By virtue of such liberal learning the monastic students became able to "oppose the heretics as they would drive beasts···

18. Rahula, Walpola. History of Buddhism in Ceylon, pp.158-159 (Āraddhavipassakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ satepi sahassepi saṃvijjamāne pariyattiyā asati ariyamaggapaṭivedho nāma na hoti).

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22. Takakusu. A Record of the Buddhist Religion, pp.176-177.

23. Keith. History of Sanskrit Literature, p.404 ff

24. Altekar. Education in ancient India (Nand Kishore and Sons, Banaras, 1957), pp.328-331.

25. Aṅguttaranikāya, pt.i, ch.xiv, pp.23-26 (P.T.S.).

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We have already seen that these monasteries growing into the seminaries probably began to develop on the lines of organisations which may be designated as 'Universities'. The result had been the origin of such well-known monastic universities like Nālandā, Vikramaśilā and Odantapura and sundry others which had witnessed the wonderful efflorescene of monastic learning. Monasteries, as already observed, could not keep themselves aloof from the society as they had to be heavily subsidised by the lay-devotees for their proper upkeep. But it is to be noted that although instructions on secular subjècts were imparted in these vihāras, yet they maintained their monastic character througout and became attractive centres of learning and habitats for the learned and intellectually well-equipped bhikkhus.

Apart from the above, the Buddhist monasteries also became "school of arts and crafts". In the Vinayapiṭaka there are several references to the monks working as "building overseers" who took charge of building operations on behalf of the lay-devotees. Such overseers were technically known as Navakammikas who were provided with their primary requisites, viz, clothes, food, lodging, and medicines at the expense of the donors of the buildings. They had also to repair old dwellings of the bhikkhus.[26] From the Vinaya texts we further learn that the monks were allowed to use loom, shuttles, strings, etc.[27] In other words they could utilise all the apparatus belonging to a loom. They were further allowed to cut, to sew, and to dye their garments. So to perform all such extra-religious activities sometimes regular training was needed and the inmates of the vihāras had to be, thus, provided with the facilities of

26 Cullavagga, vi, 5, 2.

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ARCHITECTURE

Let us now have a bird's eye-view of the architecture of the Buddhist monasteries as they represented one of the important forms of ancient Indian architecture. During their early stage these were designed as individual cells for bhikkhus to live therein. At the very inception, however, these were mostly built of wood on a stylobate of stone or brick. But subsequently as the monastic organisation developed considerably, they were reduced to multi-storied brick structures with many adjuncts.

Pāli literature offers us a rough idea of the architectural details of those monastic establishments of a very early age. These primitive simple monastic buildings were developed later on into elaborate magnificent ones. It is to be noted that the vihāras built by the Seṭṭhi of Rājagaha had plastered walls, white washed or coloured, and were provided with doors, windows, verandahs, boundary walls, etc.[28] The monastery erected by Anāthapiṇḍika also had its component parts, viz, dwelling-rooms, cells, gate-chambers, service-halls, halls with fire-places, store-houses, closets, cloisters, rooms for walking exercises, wells, sheds for the well, bathing places, bath-rooms, tanks, pavilions.[29] From the Pāli taxts we shall learn further details of the construction of vihāras which were sometimes fitted with doors, door-posts, and lintel, with arrangement for bolts, lock and key; with windows made by railings, network, or slips of wood,

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28, ibid, vi, 2 and 3.

29. Mahāvagga, iii, 5, 6; Cullavagga, vi, 4. 10; viii, 7, 4, (Vihāra, pariveṇa, koṭṭhaka, upaṭṭhānaśālā, aggisālā, kappiyakuṭi, vaccakuṭi, caṅkamana, caṅkamanaśālā, udapāna, udapānaśālā, jantāghara, jantāgharaśālā, pokkharinī, maṇḍapa).

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and window-blinds and shutters; solid benches against the walls of a room or under the verandah against the outside wall of the house.[30] There were also covered terraces, big halls for the Kaṭhina ceremony with high basement, service-halls, separate waiting rooms, bath-rooms supplied with door, bolt, lock and key, arrangements for hot baths, suitable furniture and solid flooring.[31] The monasteries were also provided with store-houses built as separate units, with adequate fittings for the safety of the stores. Besides, these made sufficient provisions for several outhouses or detached buildings for various purposes, e.g. the privies, cloisters, conference-room for the order etc.[32] Vihāras were built on a common and simple design. To maintain the privacy of the monks due arrangements were made for "inner chamber" which were in "shape like palankeens, or chambers on a upper storey". Those vihāras which were thatched, were generally covered with "skins and plaster", enabling the inmates to live comfortably therein during the Winter or the Summer. The whole compound of the monastery was enclosed with ramparts of three kinds,[33] viz, brick walls, fences of stones and wood, which were further surrounded by three kinds of hedges, viz, a hedge of bamboo, a hedge of thorns, a ditch.[34] The monasteries had generally "five kinds of roofings: a roofing of tiles, a roofing of stone, a roofing of plaster, a roofing of tiṇa-grass, a roofing of leaves".[35]

A few inscriptions also supply us with interesting accounts about some architectural features of the Buddhist monastery. Such a monastic establishment during its

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31, ibid, vi, 14.
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33. Horner, I. B. The Book of the Discipline, vol. V, p.215.
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With the gradual spread of Buddhism from the north to the Sātavāhana Kingdom in the south, probably during the period after the dissolution of the Mauryan empire, the cavemonasteries came into existence on the flank of the Western Ghats. While wandering among the hills of the Deccan plateau, the Buddhist monks discovered there secluded spots which were wholesome for their monastic life. Hence with liberal donations from the laity and through persistent efforts of the monks appeared many cave-monasteries which represented a pattern of construction quite unlike that of a vihāra of brick structure. The introduction of these guhā-monasteries showed a marked turning point in the history of Buddhist monachism. It should be noted that all the component structures of a big monastic settlement were not built at a time. First of all, residential caves (bhikkhu-guhā) for the monks were excavated. To this establishment, then, step by step were added cetiyagharas, maṇḍapas, etc. At the beginning the

36. Epigraphia Indica, vol. ix, p.302. (Prāg-Gaṅgeśvara sannidhau-cakre-dārumayaṃ vihāraṃ amalaṃ Śrī-Lokanāthaspadaṃ).

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plan of the monastery was irregular, the cells being disposed in one or two rows only, and often at erratic angles. But soon it took the shape of a square (or oblong in certain instances) central hall, preceded in front by a pillared vestibule, and opening out on the other sides into a number of small square cells carried further into the rock. The earliest of the vihāra-caves in Western India are those situated Bhājā. Of the other Bhuddhist monasteries of the pre-Christian era, adequate notice should be made of those at Bedsā, Ajantā,[38] Kondāne, Pitalkhorā, and the early group at Nāsik. The central halls[39] of the vihāras of Kondāne and Pitalkhorā, unlike those of others, are not plain but pillared. The most decorative form, particular y in the treatment of the facade, may be found in three cave-monasteries at Nāsik, belonging to the second century A.C. Each one of them has a pillared verandah and a large central hall, without pillars, which open out into the cells ranged from three sides. The pillared facade gives the monasteries an imposing appearance. The beautiful design of the pillars and the harmonious adjustment of component element of facade make these vihāras finest examples of earlist Indian architecture. It is striking to note that in their planning and treatment the rock-cut monasteries reveal the manner in which the practical requirements of the community were provided for. The Buddhist monasteries which were planned in the form of rows of cells round a central court, were sometimes fitted with doors and windows and their uneven surfaces were often plastered and whitewashed. Caves were even painted.[40] Consequently these cave-monasteries

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Thus in our study we find the origin of two distinct types of monasteries—remnants of which can still be found in the famous Buddhist sites. In Northern India most of the monasteries were of bricks, while in Western India they were caves, probably due to abundance of caves on the hill tops.[43] But both of these types in course of time reached the acme of perfection with all elaborate details.

An endeavour has been made to give an account of the evolution of Buddhist monasteries in almost all their aspects. These monasteries, as monastic organizations, were of prime significance. From the days of Buddha to their last existence even, they served as the centres for dissemination of knowledge—both religious and secular. They further set an example of disciplined corporate life. It may be that during the early periods the Buddhist monasteries were fashioned in a very simple manner. With the change of time as also with the re-orientation of ideas, these monastic establishments gradually obtained the aesthetic character, being superb architectural specimens. We have seen before that the first vihāras served as lodging places of individual bhikkhus. But in later times the word 'Vihāra' "almost always was used to designate the whole of building where many Bhikkhus resided."[44] In the opinion of Fergusson

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42, Brown, Percy, Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu periods), 1956 ed, p, 34,

43, Zimmer, Heinrich, The Art of Indian Asia, vol. i, p, 246,

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44, Vinaya Texts, pt, ii, p. 386 fn.

"the oldest Vihāras consist of one cell only; little hermitages, in fact, for the residence of a single ascetic. In the next class they were extended to a long verandah, with one cell behind it···. As these had, however, several doors opening outwards, they probably were divided by partitions internally. In the third, and by far the most numerous class...the cell expands into a hall, generally with pillars in the centre; are around this the cells of the monks are arranged, the abbot or prior generally occupying cells at either end of the verandah."[45] These three types of vihāras evidently show three stages of their development. The first and second types of Buddhist monasteries are frequently mentioned in early Pāli literature, while a few specimens of the third type may still be found in their ruins.

45, Fergusson. The Rock-cut temples of India (1864 ed.) pp xv-xvi,

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Chapter Two

LIFE IN THE VIHĀRAS

Life in the Buddhist monastery was regulated by strict discipline. The resident monk had to observe the basic rules of the Vinaya. From his very entry into the Saṅgha, a person's life in the vihāra was guided by some principles which were based on religion as well as on ethics. So a look into the Vinayapiṭaka will largely reveal the various aspects of the lives of the monks and the nuns in the Buddhist monasteries.

We know that the period of Vassā occupied an important position in the vihāra-life. During this period bhikkhus used to assemble at a select place and stay therein for three months to pass their Vassā. Usually the Vassāvāsa (Rain-retreat) was followed by two ceremonies, viz, Pavāraṇā and Kaṭhina. The Pavāraṇā was a solemn ceremony in which each bhikkhu had to confess his sins of commission and omission, committed, if any, during the Vassāvāsa.[1] It was almost identical with the declaration of the Pārisuddhi in the Pātimokkha ceremony.[2] The Kaṭhina ceremony, on the

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other hand, was an occasion for offering the robes by the laity to the Saṅgha.[3] It was generally held within a month of the Pavāraṇā ceremony. The bhikkhus who were proficient in cutting, sewing, dyeing, etc. of garments were usually appointed to prepare the robes in course of a single day and that was why the ceremony was called the Kaṭhina ceremony.

DAILY LIFE

The Vinaypiṭaka furnishes us with the information regarding the daily life of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis who dwelt in the vihāras. The monks were enjoined to devote completely to meditation during both the early hours of the morning and late hours of the night. Besides, they were also engaged in begging alms and training the novices. After meditation in early morning the bhikkhus had to clean their teeth and attend to their ecclesiastical duties. They had to perform various activities, e.g. to prepare, wash and dye robes, to make brushes (koccha), ladders (nisseṇi) and to white-wash (suddhi-kamma) the cetiya. Cleanliness of things (vatthuvisadakiriyā) was treated as one of the seven conditions for the fulfilment of the search after the Dhamma (dhammavicaya-bojjhaṅga).[4] A monk would not be allowed to keep long hair and nails and should not soil his body with sweat and dirt and had to clean it by regular baths. He should also keep his lodgings clean and tidy. Buddha himself mentioned five virtues accruing from sweeping. In the evening the bhikkhus had to sit together to recite the Suttas, while the nuns and others sat there, listening to the devotional recitation. After it, a religious sermon was delivered by the theras to the younger monks, followed by a free discussion on sundry questions about the

3. Vinaya Texts, pt. ii, p. 151 fn. ; Mahāvagga, vii, 1, 6.
4. Rahula, Walpola. History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p. 568.

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Dhamma. The younger monks were expected to show proper behaviour and etiquette in the presence of the theras. They should not move about or sit down knocking the elderly monks; should not sit on higher seats when the elders were seated on lower ones; should not wear sandals when the elders were without them; should not even deliver a sermon or answer a question without permission when the elders were present. When a bhikkhu used to go to a vihāra as a guest, the resident monks should welcome him warmly, take alms-bowl and robe, prepare a seat for him and attend to his needs.[5] The resident monks had also to look after their monasteries. In the Cullavagga we find that Buddha allowed the bhikkhus to repair the dilapidated as also new monastic buildings.[6] Immediately after the demise of Buddha when the monks assembled at Rājagaha, they also decided to spend the first month in repairing damaged buildings.[7] The construction-work of the monastic buildings was regarded as a way of subduing and controlling the senses. In the Commentaries we notice that when a bhikkhu was engaged in building an Uposatha-house or a refectory, he had to be busy thinking over his duties regarding that work and accordingly his evil thought (kilesas) would have little opportunity to stir.[8] We shall see subsequently how a pupil had to work under a teacher in the monastery. Apart from the daily routine of life they were also asked to take

5. ibid, pp. 180-181.

6. Anujānāmi bhikkhave navakammaṃ dātuṃ. Navakammiko bhikkhave bhikkhu ussukaṃ āpajjissati kinti nu kho vihāro khippaṃ pariyosānaṃ gaccheyyāti Khaṇḍaphullaṃ paṭisaṅkharissati.

7. Bhagavatā Kho āvuso Khaṇḍaphullaṃ-paṭisaṅkharaṇaṃ vaṇṇitaṃ. Handa mayaṃ āvuso paṭhamaṃ māsaṃ Khaṇḍaphullaṃ paṭisaṅkharoma.

8. Sammohavinodanī (P.T.S.), p. 298. (Ekacco pana navakammiko hoti, uposathāgāra-beojanasālādīni Karoti, tassa tesṃ upakaraṇāni citentassa kilesa okāsaṃ na labhanti).

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part in the Upasampadā ceremony wherein the rules of the Pātimokkha were recited, thereby attaining the moral purity. We find that when writing came into vogue, they were further entrusted with the task of copying the religious texts in addition to those duties already mentioned above. We also observe that the bhikkhus were forbidden to rub their bodies against wood when they were bathing,[9] for in the eyes of the laity this act put them into same category as boxers, wrestlers, shampooers and people who indulged in physical pleasures at a high degree. They were, however, allowed to adopt an ordinary mode of shampooing with the hand,[10] or a rubbing post. But it is not clear, as it was in the case of the nuns, whether they were allowed to shampoo one another or not.

TEACHER AND PUPIL

From the Mahāvagga we learn that Buddha noticing the ill-behaviour of his followers introduced two kinds of instructors for their proper guidance. They were Ācariya and Upajjhāya; one attached to the former was called Antevāsika, while the other attached to the Upajjhāya was called Saddhivihārika. The Vinya texts provide us with minutest details about them. Generally a new convert should live for the first ten years in unquestionable dependance upon his Upajjhāya.[11] But this period could be relaxed in the case of learned competent monk who had to live only five years in dependance on his preceptor. An unlearned one, on the other hand, had to live all his life in such a dependance.[12] Below is given a passage which will speak of the mutual relation between the Upajjhāya and the Saddhivihārika. Addressing his disciples Buddha said:

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10. ibid, v, 1, 5.
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"The Upajjhāya, Bhikkhus, ought to consider the Saddhivihārika as a son ; the Saddhivihāraika ought to consider the Upajjhāya as a father.[13] Thus these two, united by mutual reverence, confidence, and communion of life, will progress, advance, and reach a high stage in this doctrine and discipline."[14] Apart from his studies and monastic duites, the Saddhivihārika was to act as a personal attendant of the Upajjhāya.[15] He would offer him the teeth-cleanser, water and meal in the morning. He had also to accompany the teacher in his begging-round. He should supply him with drinking water, arrange for his bath, dry his robes, clean the cells, etc. If the Upajjhāya was to commit an offence, the Saddhivihārika should refrain him from it. If the Upajjhāya was guilty of any grave offence leading to the punishments of 'parivāsa', 'mānatta' and the like, the Saddhivihārika should take care that the Saṅgha might impose the same on him. The Upajjhāya had also in turn some duties towards his pupil. The rules prescribed that the teacher must be solicitous for the welfare of his pupil as a father was for his son. The Upajjhāya must look to the spiritual well-being of his Saddhivihārika. When the Saddhivihārika would fall ill, it should be the duty of the Upajjhāya to nurse him up. His services should continue till the Saddhivihārika would recover completly from illness and resume his normal activities.[16] There are also provisions for punishments for the breach of duties in the Vinaya Code. But if after the teacher's serious display of anger, the pupil begged his pardon he should be pardoned. If the Upajjhāya did not pardon him, he would be guilty of commiting the 'dukkaṭa' offence.

13. Upajjhāyo bhikkhave saddhivihārikamhi puttacittaṃ upaṭṭhapessati, saddhivihāriko upajjhāyamhi pitucittaṃ upaṭṭhapessati.

14. Mahāvagga, i. 2, 6.

15. Majumdar, R.C. Corporate life in ancient India, p. 129.

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We have seen above that there were two kinds of instructors, Ācariya and Upajjhāya.[17] Being formally elected at the Ordination Ceremony (Upasampadā), the Ācariya was an instructor only in name, while the Upajjhāya was an instructor in practice. In the Pali-English Dictionary of the P.T.S. we find that the term 'Ācariya' had been defined as "a teacher (almost syn. with Upajjhāya),"[18] and the word 'Upajjhāya' (Vedic Upādhyāya, upa+adhi+i, lit. 'one who is gone close up to') was explained as "a spiritual teacher or preceptor, master" who was often combined with 'Ācariya', a deputy or substitute of the Upajjhāya.[19] Buddhaghosa, the great Pāli Commentator, in his Samantapāsādikā, a commentary on the Vinayapiṭaka, also endeavoured to define these two terms. According to him the 'Ācariya' (Sans. Ācāriya, a teacher)[20] was one who would establish his pupil on the teachable matters of Buddha's doctrines, while 'Upajjhāya' was one who would examine the faults and merits of his disciple and place him on the right path.[21] Thus according to this definition the Ācariya was the teacher (śikṣāguru) and the Upajjhāya was the

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18. Rhys Davids, T. W. & Stede, William. The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary (Surray, 1925), p. 96.

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20. Andersen, Dines. A Pali Glossary including the words of the Pali Reader and of the Dhammapada (Copenhagen, Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, (1904-5), part, ii, p. 37.

21. Samantapāsādikā, ed. by J. Takakusu and M. Nagai, vol. i (London, Pali Text Society, 1924), pp. 47-48 (Ko ayaṃ tāta Upajjhāyo nāmā' ti. Vajjāvajjaṃ disvā codetā sāretā. ti...Ko ayaṃ tāta ācariyo nāmā' ti. Imasmiṃ sāsane sikkhitabbakadhammesu patiṭṭhāpetā mahārājā' ti).

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22. Vinaya Texts, pt. i, p, 178 fn.

23. Dutt, S. Early Buddhist Monachism (1924 ed.), p. 181.

24. Takakusu, J. A. Record of the Buddhist religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago by I-tsing, p. 120.

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who read primarily the Buddhist scriptures with the intention of being ordained at a future date, and the Brahmacārin (student) who studied the secular texts only without the desire of renouncing the household life. These lay-pupils had to bear all their educational expenses—in case of their personal services they were, however, exempted from payments.[25]

DRESS

Previously the bhikkhus were to wear the robes prepared from rags collected from the dust-heap (paṃsakulika).[26] But later they were allowed to accept the robes offered by the lay-devotees (gahapatika).[27] It was at the instance of Jīvaka Komārabhacca that Buddha allowed the bhikkhus to accept the robes (cīvara) presented by the laity. Robes could be made of linen, cotton silk, wool, coarse cloth and hempen.[28] The garment of the monk comprised an upper cloak (Saṅghāṭi), a waist cloth (Uttarāsaṅga) and an inner garment (Antaravāsaka),[29] all being oblong in shape. The upper robe was made of a single piece of cloth, while the latter ones were of double and even of fourfold pieces. It was altogether imperative for the bhikkhus to wear the three robes (ticīvara). But they could keep apart the Saṅghāṭi while ill, while observing the Vassā, while crossing the river, and while remaining secluded in the vihāra.[30] From the Pātimokkha we learn that the bhikkhus were not allowed to keep extra robes. If they could get any, they should keep that

25. ibid., pp. 105-106.
26. Cullavagga, v, 10, 2.
27. Vinaya, iii, pp. 169-171.
28. Mahāvagga, i, 30. 4 ; Sacred Book of the East, xiii, p. 173 (Khomaṃ kappāsikaṃ koseyyaṃ kambalaṃ sāṇaṃ bhaṅgaṃ).
29. Vinayapiṭaka, vol. i, pp. 289, 296 ; vol. ii, p. 302 (Ticīvara ; diguṇā saṅghāṭi. ekacciya uttarāsaṅga, ekacciya antaravāsaka).
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with them for only ten days and no more—breach of which entailed the punishment of Pācittiya. Bhikkhus could accept the robes only on special occasions enumerated in the Vinaya Code.[31] Apart from the three robes, the monks could accept mantles (pāvara), blankets (kambala), towels (mukhapuñcaka colaka), bags (parikkhāracolaka), bathing clothes (udakasāṭaka), and small pieces of cloth for itches, wounds, etc. (kaṇḍupaṭicchāda).[32] The use of shoes was in vogue among the bhikkhus. But several conditions were laid down regarding colour, shape, materials and use of shoes.[33]

FOOD

As regards their food we find that the bhikkhus had only one meal a day[34] and that before noon by begging[35]—most probably on hygienic as well as religious grounds. But gradually they were allowed to accept invitations for day's meal from the lay devotees. The alms comprised cooked food offered by the laity, collected in a single bowl and brought to the monastery in which the bhikkhus partook it all together in a big hall. The first eight seats in the dining hall were kept reserved for the senior-most monks (theras); others seats were occupied by the rest of the monks. The bhikkhus had to observe simple rules of etiquette while they were receiving alms and taking food.[36] There was no restriction as to the pure aud impure foods. The monks could not refuse to take any food given

31. Vinaya, iii, p. 202 ; iv, pp. 284, 287.
32. Mahāvagga, viii, 17-20.
33. Mahāvagga, v, 1, 30 ff.
34. Pācittiya, 37.
35. It may be noted that this practice is prevalent even today in the Buddhist countries. All the monks of the monastery do not go out to collect alms, but only some of them are out for begging early in the morning and alms thus collected is sufficient for all the monks in the monastery and they partake of it before noon.
36. Sekhiya, 27-40, 41—50.

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MEDICINES

Originally the monks were allowed to use only urine and the like (putimuttabhesajjaṃ) as medicines. But subsequently they were also permitted to use butter (sappi), cream (navanīta), oil (tela), honey (madhu) and molasses (phāṇita), animal fats, medicinal roots, herbs, leaves, fruits, gums, salts, gruels, broths and even raw meat, blood etc. as medicines. In some cases hot baths, purgatives, ointment and dressing of wounds were prescribed to cure the ailing bhikkhus.[40]

USEFUL ARTICLES

A close study of the Cullavagga, reveals that in their daily life the resident monks had to use various kinds of furniture. Inside the rooms of the monks the furniture primarily included the bedsteads "made of laths of split bamboos", with a texture of string woven across through the pierced sides, with legs of standard height equal to eight inches of accepted inch.[41] The bhikkhus were also allowed to use varieties of chairs excepting the long-armed ones.[42] They could further keep with them cotton-pillows, cupboards, bamboos and strings to hang the robes. But they were not usually permitted to use animal

37. Cf, Saḍadarśanasamuccaya, by Haribhadra Surī.

38. Laṅkāvatārasūtra, ch viii, ed. by Bunyin Nanjio (1956 ed.).

39. adiṭṭhaṃ, asutaṃ, aparisaṅkataṃ (not seen, not heard, not suspected to have been killed for a bhikkhu).

40. Dutt, N. Early Monastic Buddhism (1941 ed.), vol. i, p. 288.

41. Cullavagga, vi, 2, 6.

42. ibid, v, 37, 1 ; vi, 2, 4.

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Thus as valuable objects were sometimes collected by the bhikkhus, they were not allowed to leave the monastery without making over the charge of those objects to any one. A bhikkhu or a sāmaṇera who would fail to do so, should inform his departure duly to the Ārāmika.

WOMEN IN THE VIHĀRAS

Let us now discuss in brief the position of women in the Buddhist monasteries after their entry into the Saṅgha. Women by virtue of their sheer merit could even attain the highest spiritual bliss. There was, however, no difference between a monk and a nun in this regard. All were treated with equality in the Buddhist Order. Hence we find how Sister Nandā had "by the complete destruction of the five bonds that bind people

43. Mahāvagga, v, 7. 10.

44. ibid, v, 13, 3.

45. Vinaya, ii, 130.

46. Dutt, N. & Bajpai, K. D. Development of Buddhism in Uttar Pradesh, p. 246.

47. Cullavagga, v, 11, 5.

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to this world become an interior of the highest heavens, there to pass entirely away, thence never to return" and how Sujātā was "assured of final salvation". In the Aṅguttaranikāya also we observe that if a bhikkhu or a bhikkhuṇī concentrates strenuously in five ways will reap one of two rewards : either perfect knowledge (aññā) in this life, or the state of a non-returner (anāgāmitā) at the end of this life.[48] This shows that both the male and female members of the vihāras were of somewhat equal status. Theoretically, thus, no distinction was made between a monk and a nun. But in actual practice and treatment the bhikkhuṇīs were not to so much honoured as the bhikkhus. Thus a nun was enjoined to treat the monks with humility ; she should not sit on a seat or on the ground in front of a monk without asking leave,[49] unless she was ill ; she also should not ask questions relating to the Vinaya, Sutta, or the Abhidhamma without asking his leave.[50] Moreover the eight Garudhammas[51] prescribed

48. Aṅguttaranikāya, iii, pp. 81, 143.
49. Vinayapiṭaka, iv, p. 343,
50. ibid, iv, p, 344,
51. Cullavagga, X. 2.

(Sace, Ānanda, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī aṭṭha garudhamme paṭiggaṇhāti, sāvassa, hotu upāsampadā :

Vassasatūpasampannāya bhikkhunīya tadahūpasampannassa bhikkhuno abhivādaṃ paccuṭṭhānaṃ añjalikammaṃ sāmīcikammam kātabbaṃ Na bhikkhunīya abhikkuke avase vassaṃ vasitabbam.

Anvaddhamāsam bhikkhunīya bhikkhusaṃghato dve dhammā paccāsīsitabba-uposathapucchakaṃ ca, ovādūpasaṃkamanaṃ ca.

Vassaṃ vutthāya bhikkhunīyā ubhatosaṃghe tīhi ṭhānehi pavāretabbaṃ-diṭṭhena va sutena va, parisaṃkāya va.

Garudhammam ajjhapannāya bhikkhuniyā ubhato-saṃghe pakhamānattaṃ caritabbaṃ,

Dve vassāni chasu dhammesu sikhitasikhāya sikhamanāya ubhatosaṃghe upasampadā pariyesitabbā.

Na bhikkhuniyā kenapi pariyāyena bhikkhu akkositabbo paribhāsitabbo.

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for the nuns show the subordinate position of women in the Saṅgha. These are :

"A nun who has been ordained (even) for a century must greet respectfully, rise up from her seat, salute with joined palms, do proper homage to a monk ordained but that day."

"A nun must not spend the rains in a residence where there is no monk."

"Every half month a nun should desire two things from the Order of monks : the asking (as to the date) of the observance day, and the coming for the exhortation."

"After the rains, a nun must keep the ceremony held at the end of the rains before both orders, in respect of three matters : what was seen, what was heard, what was suspected."

"A nun, offending against an important rule, must undergo the mānatta discipline for half a month before both Orders."

"When, as a novice, she has been trained in the six rules for two years, she should seek ordination from both Orders."

"A monk is not to be reviled or abused in any way by a nun."

"From today, admonition of monks by nuns is forbidden, admonition of nuns by monks is not forbidden".[52]

Thus it is found that the bhikkhuṇīs were practically subordinate in many respects to the bhikkhus. They were not also allowed to impose any ecclesiastical punishment independently.[53] They were only to see whether punishments were or not duly inflicted upon a guilty nun. Women were even subjected to more severe punishments than those of the monks for their

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offences. The nuns were to show their respect for the monks by standing aside and not pressing forward to give directions, if they happened to be at a layman's house to which any nun had been invited for a meal.[54] No bhikkhuṇī should stand nearer than two and a half cubits to a bhikkhu when eating in community—breach of which entailed the Pācittiya offence.[55]

As regards the daily life of the bhikkhuṇīs we find an interesting account in the Vinayapiṭaka. After their meals at the noon the nuns would have to select shady nook, suitable for meditation. They did never lag behind the bhikkhus in respect of spiritual attainment. In the Therīgāthā we find that nearly all the nuns had overcome the Māra, the Evil One. The Saṃyuttanikāya also relates how the Āḷaviya nuns, and Somā, Uppalavaṇṇā, Cālā, Upacālā, Selā, Sisupacālā and many others succeeded to subdue the Māra.[56] The greater portion of the day, in the cases of senior nuns, was spent in training and teaching the Dhamma and the Vinaya to the newcomers.[57] Each bhikkhuṇī was further expected to brush and clean her own cell. The seniority of the nuns was determined by the numbers of their ordained years and spiritual advancement as in the case of the bhikkhus. Regarding the allotment of seats in the vihāras the bhikkhuṇīs enjoyed the same privileges as those enjoyed by the hbikkhus. But the nuns had not to undergo a period of probation like the monks. Two years after the Pabbajjā, they could receive the Upasampadā.[58] They had also to observe all the rituals of the Saṅgha. The admission into the Order was, however, open to all women irrespective of any distinction except in certain unusual circumstances.

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55. Vinayapiṭaka, iv, p. 263.
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The bhikkhunīs were not allowed to have their backs and other parts of their bodies scrubbed or slapped with the bones of oxen.[59] They must not be massaged or shampooed by their fellow-sisters,[60] or by probationers, novices, or by laywomen.[61] The nuns were not allowed to dwell in forests. More restrictions were, however, imposed on the nuns than the monks regarding the use of beds, seats, vehicles, etc. They were however, permitted to utilise the vehicles when they fell ill.[62] The bhikkhunīs were not allowed to use any kind of cosmetics. The nuns had to spend their Vassā at a place in the vicinity of the bhikkhus. They were not anyway granted to live alone and idependently[63]—breach of which entailed the Pācittiya offence.[64] They used to go on alms-round everyday to the lay-people, taking their alms bowl and return with the food. In the Pāli literature are found numerous references to such daily round. Thus sisters like Sukkā, Selā, Cālā, etc. being well-dressed used to visit cities nearby for alms.[65] They took their daily meals in community before mid-day. The nuns were also sometimes allowed to go to shops. It is found that some of them went there to procure the equivalent for some money deposited by a layman with a merchant for their benefit.[66] Thullanandā, a sister, is said to send a novice to a shop to purchase some oil for her, when she became ill.[67] The apparel of a nun was the simplest one, without any fringes and plaits.[68] The manner of putting on the dress was also not attractive and

59. Cullavagga, x, 10, 2.
60. Vinayapiṭaka, iv, p. 342.
61. ibid, iv, pp. 342—343.
62. Cullavagga, x, 21.
63. ibid, x, 1, 2.
64. Vinaya, iv. p. 313 ; Bhikkhuṇī-Pācittiya 56.
65. Horner, I. B. Women under primitive Buddhism, p, 218.
66. Vinaya, iv, p. 252.
67. ibid. iv, p. 250.
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graceful.[69] The nuns were forbidden to wear a "lion-cloth", saṅghāṇī. But they could use girdle (kāyabandhana) which "will go round the body and without fringes." The use of special girdles was strictly prohibited.[70] In addition to the three robes the nuns sometimes used to put on a wrapping cloak, the tharaṇa-pāvuraṇa[71] which was large enough for two to share. They were allowed to use a half-divan.[72] But they were forbidden to sleep two together in one couch.[73] They had also to wear a brassiere (saṃkacchika), described "as coming from below the collar-bone to above the naval for the purpose of hiding the breast." It must be worn, when they went into the villages. Once, it is said, as a nun did not wear it, the wind caught her cloak and blew it over her head. People seeing her in that state began to shout : "lovely is the waist of the lady." Such a remark distressed her much and consequently a rule to wear bodice, thus, was introduccd as a safeguard in the future.[74] They could also with needles repair the old and torn robes and could use "slips of cloth inserted bolt-like to hold a torn robe together, patches and darns, and small pieces of cloth sewn on by way of marking, or of strengthening the robes."[75] It was an offence for the bhikkhuṇīs to do household work which might include cooking and washing cloaks and turbans in the houses of the laity.[76]

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Our discussion as to the life in the Buddhist monasteries would be far from adequate, if we do not give here an

69. ibid, x, 10.
70. ibid, v, 29, 2.
71. Vinayapiṭaka, iv, p. 289,
72. Cullavagga, x, 27, 2, note 2.
73. Vinayapitaka, iv, p. 288.
74. ibid, iv, p. 345.
75. Mahāvagga, viii, 14, 2.
76. Horner, I. B. Women under primitive Buddhism, p. 222.

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We know that several office-bearers were appointed from amongst the bhikkhus themselves by the usual declaration called Ñatti to conduct the business of the Order. They should be impartial, not malacious, and able to distinguish between what was proper and what was improper.[80] Thus it is to be seen that they were all bhikkhus of commendable character. A list of few of the office-bearers will give an idea as to the organisational set-up of the Saṅgha :

(a) Office-Bearers In-Charge of Food :

The duty of the Saṅghabhatta—the apportioner of food[81]—was to make heaps of food, fastening tickets or marks upon it. Dabba, it is learnt, was appointed the apportioner of food. This office-bearer was appointed when there was either dearth or plenty of food—most probably for its proper distribution. He was evidently in

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77. Vinaya, ii, pp. 147, 164.
78. Dutt, N. Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its relation to Hīnayāna, p. 314n.
79. Vinaya, ii, pp. 170–171 ; Dutt, N. Early Monastic Buddhism, vol. i (1941ed.), pp. 320–321.
80. Vinaya Texts, iii, p. 25.
81. Cullavagga, vi, 21, 1.

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charge of the ration and could be dismissed and re-elected according to the need.

But there were also minor office-bearers in charge of food, such as, the Cīvabhājaka[82] (distributor of congey), Yāgubhājaka[83] (distributor of yāgu, a kind of rice pulp), Phalabhājaka[84] (distributor of fruits), and Khajjabhājaka[85] (distributor of dry food).

(b) **Office-Bearers In-Charge of Cells, Robes etc. :**

Cīvarapaṭiggahāpaka (receiver of robes) was appointed to receive the robes which were offered by lay-people to the bhikkhus generally at the end of the Vassāvāsa. It seems that this post was purely temporary. The office-bearers like Cīvara-nidahaka (robe-depositor), Cīvarabhājaka (robe-distributor)[86], Senāsana-paññāpaka (chamberlain), Sāṭiyagāhāpaka (distributor of undergarments)[87], Kaṭhina viṭṭhāraka (distributor of Kaṭhina), Patta-gāhāpaka (distributor of alms-bowls), Āsanapaññāpaka (the regulator of seats),[88], and Appamattaka-vissjjaka (disposer of trifles) whose business was to distribute among the bhikkhus needles, scissors, girdles, butter, honey, etc. were also appointed by the Saṅgha formally.

(c) **Superintending Office-Bearers :**

Among such kind of office-bearers mention may be made of Nava-Kammika (superintendent of new buildings), Ārāmika-pesaka (overseer of the ārāmika) and Sāmaṇerapesaka (superintendent of sāmaṇeras).

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82. ibid, vi, 21,2.
83. ibid.
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87. Cullavagga, vi, 233.
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(d) Other Office-Bearers :

Office-bearers of this category included: Kappiyakāraka (receiver of gifts of money from laymen)[89], Bhaṇḍāgārika (store-keper)[90], Bhājanavārika (storer of vessels), Upadhīvara (steward), Rupiyacchadaka (disposer of bullion)[91], Salākāgāhāpaka (receiver of stick), Reciter of the Pātimokkha, Chief Reciter in the Uposatha Assembly, Exhorter of the bhikkhuṇīs, Pāṇīyavārika (office-bearer in-charge of drinks), Parisanda-vārika (office-bearer in-charge of groves), Mundasayanāsanavārika (office-bearer in-charge of lodgings temporarily not-in-use) and the like.

Buddha never thought of himself as "managing" the Fraternity or the Fraternity as depending on him.[92] On the other hand, he enjoined the bhikkhus to depend on themselves and the Dhamma and not on anything or anyone else as their refuge.[93] While tracing the reason for such a remark of Buddha Dr. N. Dutt wrote: "Probably as a member of the clan which favoured democratic constitutions, the Buddha became imbued with democratic ideas. He wanted to see his Saṅgha grow on democratic lines and formed the rules accordingly."[94] In case of differences of opinion even among the members of the Saṅgha, settlement was usually made by means of the majority of votes— voting being done by means of Salākā (marked sticks) of the members and this method of settlement of dispute was known in Pāli 'Yebhuyyasika.' From

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An attempt has been made to delineate a picture of the life of the inmates of the Buddhist monasteries. Life in these vihāras was, indeed, peaceful, but usually busy with various activities. With the change of time the scope of activities of the members of the Saṅgha was further widened with their performance of manifold duties besides their own religious ones. We know that during the life-time of Buddha and few years after his Mahāparinibbāna the original Vinaya rules were rigidly followed by devout bhikkhus and bhikkhuṇīs. But as time went on, old Vinaya rules were amended and modified to suit the needs of the members of the then Saṅgha. The most important ones, however, have remained the same all through the ages and we find even today that these rules are being strictly observed by the monks in all Buddhist countries.

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Chapter Three

VIHĀRAS IN NORTHERN AND WESTERN INDIA

The ancient homes of Buddhist monasteries were, perhaps, located in Northern and Western India. From the beginning of the second century B.C. or even a century earlier, the monasteries as abodes for the monks and nuns came into existence here. Thus the history of the Buddhist vihāras which display some distinct architectural features, covers a wide period. On the plains of Northern India[1] these monasteries were mostly of bricks, while in Western India[2] they were hewn out of solid rocks. Both these two types of monasteries with residential accommodation for the Buddhist Order, had set up a long tradition of church-life in India. In the midst of several monastic complexities no one would miss the architectural grandeur

1. We have accepted here the Chinese conception of Northern India (Uttarāpatha) which comprised "the Panjab proper, with Kashmir and the adjoining hill states, including the whole of eastern Afghanistan beyond the Indus, and the present Cis-sutlej States to the West of the Saraswati river." (Majumdar, S. N. ed. Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, p. 13).

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TAKṢAŚILĀ

Takṣaśīlā as an advanced seat of learning especially for medical studies, flourished even during the Pre-Buddhist period.[3] During the reign of the Kuṣāṇa kings, however, ancient Takṣaśīlā became a congenial home for Buddhism, as a consequence of which many monasteries were established there. The remains of the monastic buildings found in the sites of Takṣaśīlā[4] which has been identified by Cunningham with the ruins near Shāh-dheri (Royal Residence), twelve miles north-west of Rawalpindi,[5] bear the memory of the most ancient vihāras in this part of the country. Archaeological excavations had discovered a number of Taxlian monasteries, some of which were of as early as the first century A.D.[6] The planning of some of these monasteries was evidently fortuitous. often comprising a complicated grouping of structures,—an arrangement that may be traced to the fact that they sometimes occupied the site of ancient stūpas, which afterwards being enlarged and elaborated, gathered around them many miscellaneous buildings, including chapels, priests' residences, and innumerable votive stūpas, so that there is little schematic co-ordination. Such were those of Dharmarājikā at

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Taxila, and of Jamalgarhi, thirty-six miles north of Peshwar, also the great group of sanctuaries at Charsada in the Peshwar Valley, and at Manikyala near Rawalpindi, besides several others in Afghanistan. Some, however, of more moderate size and unencumbered by any traditional foundation, were designed with an attempt at symmetry, as for example, those at Takht-i-Bahai, north of Hoti Mardan, and Mohra Moradu and Jaulain, at Taxila. One of the most illustrious examples of the type of monastic sanctuary is that at Takht-i-Bahai, which although ruined, is still traceable. Inspite of the varying levels of the rocky spur to which it so picturesquely clinged, it had been designed on an axial plan with all its parts logically arranged. The principal buildings were crowded within a rectangle of approximately two hundred feet in length and comprised (i) the stūpa-court on the south, (ii) the monastery on the north, and (iii) an intervening terrace for the reception of votive stūpas, small chapels and similar structures. To the west of the monastery was a conference or assembly hall, the remainder of the site being taken up by various subsidiary edifices, probably, a refectory, vestment chamber, kitchens and servants' quarters. The monastery proper or saṅghārāma for the accommodation of the monks included ranges of cells around a central courtyard. These rooms were simple and unadorned, but, on the walls between each chamber, and protected by a verandah, it became the custom to place large figure groups, often of stucco and vividly coloured, which caused these usually sombre retreats to become animated picture-galleries of sacred subjects. Of such vihāras, however, the one discovered near the Dharmarājika Stūpa is of prime significance. This monastery consisted "of several square courts open to the sky and encompassed by rows of cells in two storeys, with verandahs in front; and it was provided, no doubt, with a Hall of Assembly, refectory and kitchens. The monastery was destroyed and rebuilt

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on several occasions, but most of the remains now visible belong to the early Mediaeval Period."[7] It is sad to note that except the ruins scattered here and there, particulars about this monastery are still lacking.

But the most interesting monastic structure in Taxila may be traced in a mound called PIPPALA which lies at at the foot of the hills between Mohra Moradu and Jaulian.[8] The remains here, according to Marshall, "are of two distinct periods. To the east of the courtyard of a monastery dating from the Kuṣāṇa times and consisting of an open quadrangle in the centre with ranges of cells on its four sides. In the middle of the courtyard is the basement of a square stūpa facing north, and close beside it the ruins of three other stūpas. This early monastery, which is constructed of diaper masonry of the typical Kuṣāṇa pattern, must have fallen to ruin before the fourth century of our era : for at that time a second monastery was erected over the western side of it, completely burying the beneath its foundations all that remained of the old cells and verandah on this side. At the same time also the rest of the early monastery was converted into a stūpa-court by dismantling and levelling with the ground everything except the stūpas in the open quadrangle and the back walls of the cells which were now to serve as an enclosure wall, probably five or six feet in height, for the new courtyard."[9] The later monastery was built of heavy semi-ashler masonry and consisted of a Court of cells on the north, with an Assembly Hall, kitchen and refectory on the south. The wall between the kitchen and the dining room was constructed of rubble stone and mud

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The ruins of several other monasteries have been unearthed in Taxila. Among them the monasteries at GIRI are noteworthy. Another spacious and solidly built monastery in the semi-ashler style, immediately to the west of the Kuṇāla Stūpa may also be found. The court of this vihāra "is of the usual form (catuḥśāla), with an open rectangle in the centre surrounded by a raised verandah and cells. In the cells are the customary arched niches for the reception of lamps, etc."[10] Monasteries which are now in a dilapidated condition, were further erected at Jaṇḍial, Mohrā Morādu Jaulian. The vihāra at Mohrā Morādu is said to have an assembly hall, refectory, kitchen, store-room, bath-room and latrine.[11] Except the monastic ruins covering nearly whole of Taxila, there is nothing left at present to describe these vihāras. There are frequent references to Taxila in the Pāli literature as a centre of learning.[12] The Buddhist Jātaka relates that young men from all over the country congregated in this city and took up secular studies.[13] A number of foreigners even from distant lands like Korea and Japan besides many Greeks, came here in order to

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Indus and along the lower course of the Gilgit river[20], became a stronghold of Buddhist learning. Both Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang had left for us valuable information about this country. The latter one noticed that writing was prevalent there. Letters were nearly like those of proper India, but the language was somewhat different. There were about a hundred saṅghārāmas in the country, with something like a thousand priests who showed no great zeal for learning and were careless in their moral conduct. It may be noted that few years ago several Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts were found in the ruins of a Stūpa in Gilgit.[21] The priceless treasures unearthed in this place conclusively prove that the people of Gilgit in those early days felt an urgent necessity for the preservation of the sacred scriptures which were copied in the 5th or 6th century A.C. and as such these are some of the earliest so far discovered in India, similar to the Bower manuscript and to those found in Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan. The reason behind such a collection was that well-to-do persons seeking merit by propagating the dharmaśāstras, as enjoined in the Buddhist texts, had the sacred scriptures copied out for them and deposited in a sacred place like the stūpa. This also accounts for the name of the donor, his relatives and friends appearing in the colophons of some of the manuscripts.[22]

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In Kāśmīra too Buddhism became a popular religion even during the reign of the native king Surendra who ruled sometime after Buddha, but before Aśoka. Being a devout Buddhist, King Surendra built many monasteries

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Aśoka, the celebrated Mauryan monarch, further extended his gracious hands towards Kāśmīra, which was a border province of his empire.[23] According to the 'Rājataraṅginī', the Caitya built by him in the DHARMĀRAṆYA VIHĀRA near the source of the Jhelum was so lofty that the eye could not see the extent of its height.[24] Besides, in Vitastatra (Vethavutur) and at Suskaletra (Hukhalitar) this emperor founded a number of vihāras and stūpas.

Mention may also be made in this regard of a big Buddhist monastery known as KṚTYĀŚRAMA VIHĀRA[25] which was constructed in the vicinity of Baramulla by Jalauka, Emperor Aśoka's son and previously a staunch Saiva. This Vihāra which was dedicated to Kṛtyādevī, a Buddhist witch,[26] was in existence till the eleventh century. It had left its name (in a corrupted form) to the village Kitashom which is situated on the left bank of the Vitasta, about five miles below Baramulla.

The great Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaṇiṣka whose reign marked a "turning point in the history of Buddhism and Buddhist literature", is said to have established many monasteries in Kāśmīra for the Buddhist Order. Among them the Kaṇiṣka Mahāvihāra was, however, a remarkable one. It was situated in a newly founded city named Kaṇiṣkapura which has been identified with modern Kanispur in Kāśmīra[27] and may be located in the west

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There was also another monastery, viz, KUNḌALVANA VIHĀRA in Kāśmīra, where was held the Fourth Buddhist Council.[29] Hiuen-Tsang also heard of this monastery as the place of such a great conference. At this Council Buddhist doctrines were compiled and explained according to the Sarvāstivāda School of Buddhism and renowned teachers like Pārśva, Vasumitra, Aśvaghoṣa and others took active parts in it. About five hundred bhikkhus assembled there on this occasion and compiled the commentaries known as the Vibhāṣā-Śāstras, on the three Piṭakas of the Buddhist Canon. Bu-ston related that after the recital of the texts it was settled that the texts acknowledged by the eighteen sects were all words of Buddha.[30] Hiuen-Tsang recorded that this Council composed 100,000 stanzas of Upadeśa-Śāstras explaining the canonical sūtras, 100,000 stanzas of the Vinaya-Vibhāṣā-Śāstras explaining the Vinaya, and 100,000 stanzas of the Abhidharma-Vibhāṣā-Śāstras in explanation of the Abhidharma.[31] The treatises which were thus prepared in this Council were copied on copper plates

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At Harwan, formerly known as SAḌARHADVANA (the Grove of six arhats), situated to the north-east of the Saṅkarācārya hill and about two miles above the Shalimar Garden on the Dal Lake are to be found the ruins of a large Buddhist monastery, founded during the reign of the Kuṣāṇas. The renowned Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna is known to have resided at this place during his sojourn in Kāśmīra towards the close of the second century A.C. Two of the structures unearthed on the hill-side above the rushing torrent flowing from the Harwan water reservoir are the triple-base of a medium sized stūpa in a rectangular courtyard facing the north and a group of cells which might have been used as chapels or for residential purposes. A little higher up the hill-side have been found the remains of a large Caitya built in picturesque 'diaper pebble' style of masonry. The whole hill-side, during the period to which the ruins belong, was presumably arranged in level terraces, on each of which were erected several edifices which were obviously the parts of the Vihāra.

Hiuen-Tsang on his way to the capital in Kāśmīra noticed a monastery called the HUSKARAVIHĀRA in the city, established by the Kuṣāṇa king Huska and now known as Ushkar in Baramulla. The Pilgrim offered his adorations here.[32] This Vihāra was rebuilt in the eight century A.C. by Lalitāditya-Muktadipa, the greatest indigenous ruler of Kāśmīra.

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Amṛtaprabhā, the chief queen of Meghavāhana, another illustrious Buddhist king of Kāśmīra, built a lofty monastery for the use of the bhikkhus who hailed

32. Beal, S. The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 68.

from the plains. This Vihāra was known as the AMṚTA-BHAVANA and was situated at modern Antabhavan, a small village near Vicharnag, about three miles to the north of Śrīnagar. Here Sir Aurel Stein in June, 1895, discovered the remains of "what appears to have been once a Vihāra". He described it as follows: "A solid mound constructed of stone and concrete which rises in the centre of the site and is still in its ruined state over twenty feet high, can scarcely be anything but a stūpa. Around it can be traced the foundations of a great quadrangular building marked by large carved slabs in situ. The base of a staircase leading to the stūpa mound can also be distinguished. About 30 yards to the east lies a tank-like depression which has retained parts of a massive enclosing wall of great antiquity". Another queen Yukadevī also built a Vihāra "of wonderful appearance" at NADAVANA (Narvor) in the northern part of Śrīnagar. Indradevī, other queen of king Meghavāhana, is considered to have erected a stūpa and a vihāra that was named after her as INDRADEVĪ BHAVANA—exact location of which has not yet been found out. Queen Khadana also built another Vihāra at KHADANIYAR, about four miles below Baramulla on the right bank of the Jhelum.

During the reign of Pravarasena II a Vihāra known as the JAYENDRAVIHĀRA was built by the king's maternal uncle towards the close of the sixth century A.C. and a colossal image of Buddha, known as Vṛhad-buddha was placed in it for worship.[33] On his arrival in the capital Hiuen-Tsang was lodged in this Vihāra and studied the various Buddhist texts including the works of Nāgārjuna with a venerable monk aged about seventy.[34] The learned teacher Bhadanta or Yaśa explained to him all the difficult passages in the sacred

33. Dutt, N. & Bhattacharya, D. M. Gilgit Manuscripts, vol. i, p. 28.

34. Stein, M. A. Kalhana's Chronicle of the kings of Kashmir (1900 ed.), p. 103 n.

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We may also mention here the "world famous" monastery known as MOROKABHAVANA built by Pravarasena's minister Moroka. It was, perhaps, existed in Pravarapura that was on the right bank of the Vitastā and at the foot of the Hari Parvat Hill. Skanda, one of the ministers of Yudhiṣṭhira who was the son and successor of Pravarasena, is said to have established a Vihāra that was known after him as SKANDABHAVANA VIHĀRA. The monastery had left its name Khandabhavan to a locality in Srinagar, which lay in the north of the city between Nau Kadal (6th Bridge) and I'd Gah. Sir Aurel Stein inclined to trace Skanda's monastery in the close vicinity of the Ziarat of Pir Mohammad Basur.[35]

A huge Vihāra known as the RĀJAVIHĀRA in Parihasapora was also built by Lalitāditya, the youngest son of Pratāpāditya, though himself not a Buddhist. This monastery was a quadrangle of twenty-six cells enclosing a square courtyard which was originally paved with stones. In front of the cells was a broad verandah, probably covered, the roof being supported by a colonnade which all ran along the edge of the ten-foot high plinth. In the middle of the west wall were three cells preceded by a raised vestibule projecting into the

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35. **Ganhar, J. N. & Ganhar, P. N. Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 56.**

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In the north-eastern corner of the Parihasapura karewa, a little to the north of the Rājavihāra (Royal Monastery) was also the Tukhara or Turkish minister's Vihāra known as CANKUNA VIHĀRA after its founder, an alchemist. It contained a high stūpa and a number of golden images. Later on when the monastery was in its ruined condition, Rilhaṇa's saintly wife Sussala built it newly. Kalhaṇa recorded that her Vihāra made the city a joy to look at. A number of structures which were intended as the residences for both students and monks were raised alongside the monastery.

The Vihāra which was probably named after the present village SANGROM, situated about half a dozen miles from Baramulla, was referred to by the Chinese Pilgrim, Hiuen-Tsang who found it on the southern slope of a mountain about 140 or 150 li to the west of the capital by the side of a river. It belonged to the Mahāsaṅghika School and accommodated more than a hundred monks. In former days Bodhila or Buddha-tara, 'the master of Śāstras', had written 'Tattvasañ-cayaśāstra' at this saṅghārāma.[36]

There were sundry other monasteries in Kāśmīra. In the account of Hiuen-Tsang we find that there were above one hundred Buddhist monasteries and five thousand brethern.[37] From such a description of numerous monasteries in this part of the country we get a rough idea of their lay-out, construction, etc. Following him

36. Ganhar, J. N. & Ganhar, P.N. Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 87.

37. Beal, S. Buddhist Records ot the Western World, i, p. 148.

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we find that some of these monasteries, especially the one at the foot of the Saṅkarāchārya Hill, must have consisted of a number of spacious buildings which accommodated hundred of monks. The monastery that was built of strong masonry at a distance of about six miles from Pandrethan had an imposing look even in its ruined condition. The structures of these vihāras might have been several storeys high. The sites were also carefully chosen. Almost all the saṅghārāmas which were found by the Chinese Pilgrim in Kāśmira were on the side of some mountain or by the side of a river or near a spring, amidst beautiful natural surroundings and presenting a panoramic view of the vast stretches of level ground in front. He also observed that many such monasteries had stūpas possessing the relics of arhats, Thus we find that the stūpa in a monastery on the side of Zabarban mountain was fifty feet in height.

LADAKH

Even during the very early period Buddhism had an important centre in Ladakh. In the account of Fa-Hien, the Chinese Pilgrim, who travelled (A.C. 399—414) in India and Ceylon in search of the Buddhist books of Discipline, we find that Buddhism was then there the prevailing faith and that the Chinese name of Ladakh was K'eeh-ch'ā.[38] This Chinese traveller came to Ladakh from Khotan. The King (probably Gyalpo) of the country was then holding the Pañcapariṣad or the great quinquennial assembly which was presumably an ecclesiastical conference, first instituted by King Aśoka for general confession of sins and inculcation of morality. On such an occasion the king requested the presence of the śramaṇas from all quarters of his kingdom. This information proves that there were in those early days many monasteries in Ladakh

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for the accommodation of the Buddhist monks. It was further related by our pilgrim that the śramaṇas were assembled in sufficiently large numbers and their place of session was grandly decorated with silken streamers, canopies and golden water-lilies. The assembly took place, in the first, second or third month of the spring and lasted about a month at the end of which the king and his ministers made their offerings. Fa-Hien saw in Ladakh two relics of Buddha—one of them was his spitoon or bowl made of stone and in colour like his alms-bowl, the other was a tooth of Buddha for which the people erected a stūpa, connected with which there were more than a thousand monks and their disciples, all students of the Hīnayāna.[39] Although at the present stage of our knowledge we do not get some specific information about any early monastery in Ladakh, yet from numerous references found in various source-materials we may conclude that there were numerous saṅghārāmas of the Theravāda School of Buddhism. Even today gumpās or monasteries are the most conspicuous buildings in Ladakh. The most renowned and oldest monastery in this country is the HEMIS GUMPĀ, situated about twenty-two miles to the south-east of Leh and belonged to the Red Sect. This monastery that accommodates hundreds of Lamas is now connected with Leh by a motorable road. Another monastery which is to be seen at LAMAYURU, about sixty miles from Leh, includes a large number of buildings and contains a colossal image of Avalokiteśvara with eleven heads and a thousand hands. A similar big statue of the god is to be found in SANKAR GUMPĀ near Leh, which belonging to the Yellow Sect was probably the only monastery built on a level plain in Ladakh. Other noteworthy monasteries are SPITUK, four miles from Leh, REZONG,

39. Legge, James. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, etc. (New York, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1965), pp. 22-23.

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SPITI

Monasteries like the Kyi Gumpā and Tābo Gumpā at Spiti on the Himalayas may also be mentioned here. The Tābo monastery was remarkable for its marvellous frescoes which might remind us of the sweet memories of the paintings of Ajantā.[40] On the walls of that monastery were seen in a somewhat damaged condition about five hundred paintings which represented the wonderful specimens of art depicting the past and present lives of Lord Buddha. It was said that Ye-shes-hod or Jñānaprabha sent Ratnabhadra and twenty other young Tibetans to Kāśmīra for studies. Ratnabhadra was known to have established a number of beautiful Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh, Guge, and Spiti.[41] Thus the Tābo and Kyi monasteries at Spiti were probably the ones erected by him. These monasteries were indeed large and busy centres of the cultural activities in this valley, had influenced much besides the religious beliefs of the people and played a significant role in bringing about a transborder orientation among the people as these were for many years the sole places that imparted education, both religious and secular, and set up cultural links with similar institutions in Tibet and Bhutan. But it is sad to note that so far no archaeological survey of these has been made by the government to evaluate the artistic excellences of such monastic establishments.

40. Chopra, Pran. On an Indian border (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 46 ; Ānanda Bāzār Patrikā (a Bengali Newspaper) dated April 20-21, 1969.

41. Ganhar, J. N. & Ganhar, P. N. Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh, p. 183.

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CĪNABHUKTI

At Cīnabhukti, i.e. Cīna-allotment, which was situated exactly eleven miles from Amritsar on the high-road to Sialkot,[42] Hiuen-Tsang found ten monasteries, in one of which, called "Pleasure-giving" monastery, was a monk named Vinītaprabha (Pi-ni-to-poh-la-po) distinguished for his learning and piety. This monk had himself composed a commentary on the Pañca-Skanda-Śāstra, and on the Vidyāmātrasiddhi-Tridaśaśāstra. Under this scholar the foreign traveller studied the 'Abhidharma Śāstra', the 'Abhidharma-prakaraṇa-sāsana-śāstra, the 'Nyāya-dvāra-tāraka-śāstra, and others and remained there fourteen months.[43]

JĀLANDHARA

In a well-known monastery at Jālandhara in Northern India, which included the state of Chamba on the north, Mandi and Sukhet and which was the capital, according to the Padmapurāṇa (Uttarkhaṇḍa) of the great daitya king Jālandhara,[44] there was, a very good collection of manuscripts. Hiuen-Tsang's description about the place made a reference to that fact. From the Kingdom of Cīnapati, going north-east 140 or 150 li, the Chinese Traveller reached the kingdom of Jālandhara. On entering this country the Pilgrim went to NAGARA-DHANA CONVENT, where there was an eminent priest named Candravarma who was thoroughly acquainted with the Tripiṭaka. On this account he rested here four months, studying the 'Prakaraṇapādavibhāṣāśāstra.'

BAHAWALPUR

The Copper-plate Inscription discovered in 1869 in

42. Cunningham, A. Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, xiv, p, 54,

43. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, i, p. 292,

44. Law, B. C. Historical geography of ancient India, p. 86 ; Dey, N. L. The geographical dictionary of ancient and mediaeval India, p. 80 ; Padmapurāṇa (Uttarakhaṇḍa). ch. 51.

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a ruined Buddhist Stūpa at Sue Vihar, about sixteen miles S. W. of Bahawalpur, in the Bahawalpur area, Punjab, revealed that there was a Buddhist monastery in that region.[45] It referred itself to the reign of the Maharaja Rajatiraja Devaputra Kaniṣka and was dated the year 11, the 28th day of the Macedonian month Daisios. This Kaniṣka was doubtless Kaniṣka I. The object of the inscription was to record the erection of a relic pillar (yaṣṭi) or stele of the monk Nāgadatta by a certain mistress of monastery (vihārasvāminī) named Balanaṃdi and another lady at a place called Damaṇa.[46]

VALABHĪ

Turning to the west we have a brighter picture of the development of the monasteries. Valabhī, situated near modern Wala in Kathiawar, flourished most as a chief centre of monastic learning in Western India. Epigraphic records showed that the monastery of Valabhī was patronized by the royal authorities and was used as residence by Guṇamatī and Sthiramatī, two disciples of Vasubandhu.[47] Hiuen-Tsang visited the ruins of this monastery. He related that not far from the city was a great monastery "which was built by the Arhat Āchāra (O-Che-lo)".[48] This information was supplemented by a grant of Dhārāsena II of Valabhī, in which

45. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, N. S., vol. iv, pp. 477—502.

46. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes, vol. iii (Calcutta University, 1922 ed.), pp. 459—474 (Majumdar, N. G. The Sue Vihar Copper-Plate of the reign of Kaniṣka.—bhichusya Nagadatasya dhamkhakathisya acarya—Damatrata-śiṣyasya acarya—Bhavapraśiṣyasya yaṭhim aropayat (i)iha Damane viharasvamiṇim upasika Balanaṃdi (ku)ṭubinī Balajaya-mata ca imaṃ yaṭhipratiṭhanamka pa (u)-ja (ca)m anuparivaraṃ dadatiṃ,

47. Indian Antiquary, vi, p. 9. (Būhler. A Valabhī copper-plate grant) ; Historical and economic studies, p. 59. (Dikshit. Valabhī the ancient Buddhist Univeasity).

48. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western world, vol. ii, p. 268.

a ruined Buddhist Stūpa at Sue Vihar, about sixteen miles S. W. of Bahawalpur, in the Bahawalpur area, Punjab, revealed that there was a Buddhist monastery in that region.[45] It referred itself to the reign of the Maharaja Rajatiraja Devaputra Kaniṣka and was dated the year 11, the 28th day of the Macedonian month Daisios. This Kaniṣka was doubtless Kaniṣka I. The object of the inscription was to record the erection of a relic pillar (yaṣṭi) or stele of the monk Nāgadatta by a certain mistress of monastery (vihārasvāminī) named Balanaṃdi and another lady at a place called Damaṇa.[46]

VALABHĪ

Turning to the west we have a brighter picture of the development of the monasteries. Valabhī, situated near modern Wala in Kathiawar, flourished most as a chief centre of monastic learning in Western India. Epigraphic records showed that the monastery of Valabhī was patronized by the royal authorities and was used as residence by Guṇamatī and Sthiramatī, two disciples of Vasubandhu.[47] Hiuen-Tsang visited the ruins of this monastery. He related that not far from the city was a great monastery "which was built by the Arhat Āchāra (O-Che-lo)".[48] This information was supplemented by a grant of Dhārāsena II of Valabhī, in which

45. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, N. S., vol. iv, pp. 477—502.

46. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes, vol. iii (Calcutta University, 1922 ed.), pp. 459—474 (Majumdar, N. G. The Sue Vihar Copper-Plate of the reign of Kaniṣka.—bhichusya Nagadatasya dhamkhakathisya acarya—Damatrata-śiṣyasya acarya—Bhavapraśiṣyasya yaṭhim aropayat (i)iha Damane viharasvaminim upasika Balanaṃdi (ku)ṭubinī Balajaya-mata ca imaṃ yaṭhipratiṭhanamka pa (u)-ja (ca)m anuparivaraṃ dadatiṃ,

47. Indian Antiquary, vi, p. 9. (Būhler. A Valabhī copper-plate grant) ; Historical and economic studies, p. 59. (Dikshit. Valabhī the ancient Buddhist Univeasity).

48. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western world, vol. ii, p. 268.

the Sanskrit name of the founder was given as Atharya.[49] This Monastery was known as the BAPPĀPĀDIYA Monastery (Monastery of the Father) as was found in a grant to this Vihāra made by king Dhruvasena II in circa A.C. 588, in which he recorded the name of "Ācārya Bhadanta Sthiramatī who founded the Vihāra of Śrī Bappāpāda at Valabhī".[50] The Maitraka kings, who were ruling there during circa 480 to 775 A.C. were great patrons of the Vihāra ;[51] they used to offer direct grants for the purpose of meeting the general expenditure of the monastery as also for strengthening its library through acquisition of "books on Buddhism" as is evident from "Saddharmasya pustakopacayārthaṃ" in the grant of Guhasena I, dated 559 A.C.[52] The addition of this item perhaps indicates that by Guhasena's time the monasteries were either organised or were in the process of organisation as seats of study and learning and were building up libraries.[53] The Valabhī monasteries were built, as the inscriptions related, for three reasons, e.g. (a) to lodge the Buddhist Saṅgha which gathered together from different quarters, and consisted of bhikkhus who practised the eighteen Nikāyas, (b) for the worship of the Buddha-image, and (c) for the installation and maintenance (of a library) of books. Hiuen-Tsang observed some hundred saṅghārāmas (monasteries), with about 6000 priests, most of them studying the texts of the Little Vehicle, according to the Sāmmatiya School.[54] Bhaṭṭāraka, himself a Śaiva, was also supposed to be the founder of an old monastery called BHAṬṬĀ-RAKA Monastery as a grant (circa A.C. 567) of Guhasena offered evidence. This Vihāra flourished for

49. Indian Antiquary, vol. iv, p. 164 n.
50. Indian Antiquary, vol. vi, p. 9.
51. Virji, Krishnakumarri J. Ancient history of Saurashtra, p. 186.
52. Indian Antiquary, vii, p. 67 ff.
53. Dutt, S. Buddhist monks and monasteries of India p. 228.
54. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, p. 266.

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Duḍḍā, a grand-daughter of Bhaṭṭāraka and sister's daughter (bhāgineyī) of Dhruvasena I, was also supposed to establish a grand monastery generally known as the DUḌḌĀ VIHĀRA.[55] It may not be too much to say that, what Nālandā was to the Imperial Guptas, Duḍḍā Monastery which may be called the Nālandā of the West, was to the Maitrakas of Valabhī. The Wala grant of King Dhruvasena I recorded how he granted the village of Pippalarunikhari (Piplod) to the "worshipful Buddhas endowed with perfect intelligence" for the purpose "of repairing the fallen and broken portion of the monastery, and for procuring frankinscense, lamps, oil and flowers for worship and for procuring food, medicine for the sick, clothing and so forth".[56] Another gift was made by Guhasena of four villages "by pouring out water to the Community of the revered Śākya monks belonging to the eighteen schools (of the Hīnayāna) who have come from various directions to the great convent of Duḍḍā built by the venerable Duḍḍā···in order to procure food, clothing, seats, remedies and medicines for the sick and so forth".[57] The purpose of such gifts, therefore, was not only religious but also humanitarian. Similar grants were made by Dhārāsena III, Dhārāsena IV, and Śilāditya III.[58] If Nālandā had at least six royal patrons, if not more, as Hiuen-Tsang had observed, then it may be found that Duḍḍā

55. Sankalia, H. D. Archaeology of Gujarat, p. 231.
56. Indian Antiquary, iv, pp. 106-107.
57. Indian Antiquary, iv, pp. 175-176.
58. Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, i, (N. S.), pp. 36, 37, 39, 40.

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Vihāra, too, had many royal benefactors.[59] This Monastery of Daḍḍā became the nucleus of an extensive monastic group known as the "Duḍḍā group of monasteries" (DUḌḌĀ VIHĀRAMAṆḌALA) which included the Buddhadāsa Monastery, (A.C. 536) known after Ācārya Bhadanta Buddhadāsa, the Abhyantarika Monastery (A.C. 567) established by Mimmā, the Kākā Monastery (A.C. 589) built by kākā, a merchant, the Gohaka Monastery (A.C. 627-42) erected by Gohaka, the Vimalagupta Monastery established by Ācārya Vimalagupta, and the Sthirmatī Monastery erected by Sthirmatī who was not Vasubandhu's disciple. All these monasteries were heavily subsidised by the kings. Apart from the above, mention may also be made of the Vihāras of Vaṃsakata (a village—A.C. 605), of Yakṣaśūra (A.C. 608), of Pūrṇānnabhaṭṭa, and of Yodhāvaka (A.C. 645), which were fortunate enough to receive the liberal grants from the Maitraka kings, e.g. Dhruvasena I, Guhasena, Dhārāsena II, Śilāditya I, Dhruvasena II, Dhruvasena III, Śilāditya II and Śilāditya III of Valabhī. Though Theravāda Buddhism prevailed in Valabhī, we notice some traces of the existence of Mahāyāna Buddhism also side by side. Thus Dhruvasena II made a grant to a monastery mentioned just above at the village of Yodhāvaka, erected by one Skandabhaṭṭa, the resident saṅgha of which was stated in the grant as: "Mahā-nikāya Ārya Bhikṣu-saṅgha."[60]

It would be quite relevant in this connection if we mention the Yakṣaśūra Monastery built by Yakṣaśūra, the Pūrṇānnabhaṭṭa Monastery erected by Pūrṇānnabhaṭṭa and the Ajita Monastery built by merchant Ajita. These vihāras were established by one Yakṣaśrī and patronised by Śilāditya I and Dhruvasena II and meant exclusively for the nuns.

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61. Epigraphia Indica, vol. vi, p. 286 (Bhandarkar. The Plates of Dantivarman of Gujarat) ; ibid, vol. xxii, pp. 66-67 (Altekar. A new copper-plate of Dhruva II).

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and are advanced to high rank ; their famous names are, as a reward, written in white on lofty gates. After this, they can follow whatever occupation they like".[62] From his account it would further appear that the courses of study at both the monasteries of Valabhī and Nālandā, were more or less identical. Valabhī might have laid greater emphasis on the study of the doctrines of Hīnayāna than those of Mahāyāna. Although Valabhī was a receiving centre of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism, yet it would have radiating centre as well. Dr. Sankalia wrote : "Its thousands of monks and nuns should have influenced the culture of the sixth and the post-sixth century Gujarat and Kathiawar".[63] It is indeed heart-rending to assume that the Arab (Tajjika) invaders probably at sometime in the eighties of the eighth century A.C. destroyed these well-organised Valabhī monasteries completely. But historical account regarding such a destruction is still extremely wanting. On the other hand, few fantastic legends from different sources supply us with meagre information about the sad end of these vihāras.[64]

PITALKHORĀ

Apart from the above mentioned vihāras which were mostly brick structures, there were erected, probably from the second century B.C., among the hills of the Western Ghāts quite a large number of rock-cut monasteries which were suitable residences for the bhikkhus and became wonderful specimens of earliest Indian architecture. At the very inception, the plan of these Guhā-monasteries, was rather "irregular, the cells being disposed in one or two rows only, and often at erratic angles. The typical plan, however, soon took shape in the form

62. Takakusu. A Record of the Buddhist Religion, p. 177,
63. Sankalia, Hasmukh D., The Archaeology of Gujarat, pp. 231—232.
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of a square (or oblong in certain instances) central hall, preceded in front by a pillared verandah or vestibule, and opening out on the other sides into a number of small square cells carried further into rock. The halls are usually provided with raised benches and the cells with similar beds. By the beginning of the Christian era, the type appears to have been well established".[65] The Caitya-halls of these cave-monasteries consisting of long rectangular halls, rounded at the rear end and divided internally into a nave, an apsė and two side aisles, bear a curious resemblance of the Christian church in shape as also in use. From the epigrapic evidences as well as architectural style it may be said that the Buddhist vihāras excavated at Pitalkhorā which is at present a ravine among the Indhyādri hills, about twelve miles south of Chalisgām in Khāndesh, were of an early period.[66] Unfortunately the Caitya here is in its dilapidated condition and has lost almost the front half.

JUNĀGAḌH

Junāgaḍh in Saurāṣṭra, where is found an Aśokan edict in Brāhmī characters, had become from as early as the third century B.C. an important Buddhist place. Hiuen-Tsang when he was visiting this area, saw some fifty saṅghārāmas here, with about three thousand priests who mostly belonged to the Sthavira School of the Great Vehicle. It is interesting to note that at Junāgaḍh some caves which were used for residential purposes by the Buddhist monks were excavated. The caves of the Junāgaḍh area may be divided into three groups, namely, those at Junāgaḍh proper, those in

65. Majumdar, R. C. ed. The History and Culture of the Indian people, vol. ii, p. 503 (The age of Imperial Unity).

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Ūparkoṭ and those called Khāprākhodiā, close to the town. They had two to three storeys and had been arranged in three stages. Among the caves at Ūparkoṭ, that was the citadel of the old city, the caitya-windows, the deep tanks measuring seventeen feet square, and the two cells, known as Aḍicḍi-vāv and Navaghan-vāv, may be the most interesting. All these remains show that there were numerous large monasteries in early times at Junāgaḍh and on the mount Girnar. The ruins of two brick-built stūpas had been found at Intwa on a hill about three miles away from Aśoka's edict. The only inscribed backed clay seal showed that a community of Buddhist monks dwelt in the Monastery of Mahārāja Rudrasena who was most probably Rudrasena I (A.C. 199 to 222) of the Kṣatrapa family. Huien-Tsang observed a Saṅghārāma on the top of a mountain called Yuh-Chen-to (Ujjanta) near the city. He also noticed that the cells and galleries of the monastery had mostly been excavated from the mountain-side that was covered with thick jungle and forest trees, whilst streams flowed round its limits. Saints and sages roamed, took rest and stayed there.[67] The remains of cells at Junāgaḍh suggested that there was at one time a monastery for the accommodation of a larger fraternity, while some of the more elaborate excavations, particularly those in the Ūparkoṭ by their design seemed to signify some special form of ceremonial or ritual. These halls, apparently for communal purposes, were in two storeys connected by a winding staircase, with a lower storey having broad recesses all round its walls surmounted by a typical frieze of Buddhist caitya arches. The upper chamber to which was attached a small refectory, also contained a tank and was surrounded by a corridor. But the most striking feature of this compartment were the six columns supporting the roof, which on account of their rich carving, from base to capital,

67. **Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, ii, p. 269.**

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stood out both in their design and technique as the production of one or more experienced craftsmen. No other workmanship quite of this character was known in these parts, and it seemed as if here, early in the Christian era probably about 300 A.C., that a small group of rock-carvers of exceptional ability flourished for a time and then to have disappeared.

SĀNĀH

The caves at Sānāh, which was to the south-west of Taḷājā and sixteen miles north of Ūnā, represented an important Buddhist monastic establishment in Western India. Both sides of the hill here were honeycombed with more than sixty-two caves which were of a plain type and arranged with tanks for storing water. The largest of them was locally known as Ebhal-maṇḍap measuring $68\frac{1}{2}' \times 61' \times 16\frac{1}{2}'$ and had six pillars in front. The vihāras were also very simple without unveiling any significant architectural feature.

NĀSIK

At Nāsik there was a group of twenty-three caves which were later renovated and sometimes enlarged by the Buddhists. Although the paintings which once adorned the walls of the vihāras at Nāsik are not visible now, yet there seems very little doubt as to their existence in earlier days on the walls. In this respect these caves like those at Ajantā differed widely from the earliest primitive cells of the monks. Special attention should be paid to the three great monasteries, the oldest of which (i.e. No. 8) recorded the name of Nahapāna, the second (i.e. No. 3) that of Gautamīputra, and the third (i.e. No. 15) that of Śrī Yajña dated about A.C. 100, 130 and 180 respectively. All had columned porticos and large central halls without pillars, out of which opened the usual range of cells containing in most instances stone beds. In their general appearance the porticos of these

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three vihāras were much alike, but the variations in details were also notable, specially in the design of pillars. The monastery of Śrī Yajña was the last to be excavated, but it was planned in much the same type as the others of the group. Then several centuries afterwards, when the Mahāyāna priests took over these early monasteries, the interior of this particular vihāra seemed to have been considerably altered in order to make it suitable for the performance of the later theistic ritual. The two principal Vihāras, Nos. 3 and 8, at Nasik were almost similar in dimensions and arrangements. Both of them were square halls measuring more than 40ft., each side, without any pillars in the centre, and were covered on three sides by sixteen cells of equal dimensions. The front side held a six-pillared verandah, in the one case with a cell at each end, in the other with only one cell. The architecture also was in some respects so identical, that the one seemed to be an intentional copy of the other. The pillars in the verandah of cave No. 8 were also similar to those in the great Caitya at Karle. But the pillars of the Gautamīputra Cave, on the other hand, had lost much of their elegance. Cave no. 12 at Nāsik was a small Vihāra, its central hall being 32ft. by 23ft. with only four cells on one side. We find that the cave had never been finished and considerable alterations had been made in its interior at some date long subsequent to its first excavation, evidently to prepare it for Brahmanical worship. Its verandah, however, with two attached and two free standing columns, was obviously of the same age the Nahapāna Cave no. 8. An inscription upon it recorded that it was excavated by "Indrāgnidatta, the Yavana, a northerner from Dattāmitrī".[68] The great Vihāra (No. 15) beyond the Caitya Cave and 12 ft. above its level, was one of the most important of the series, not only from its size, but from

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its ordinance and date. The hall here was 61 ft. in depth by 37½ ft. wide at the outer end, increasing to 44 ft. at the inner and with eight cells on each side. It seems probable that originally it was only 40 ft. in depth, but later on it was extended, as it is found in the inscription in the verandah, by Lady Vāsu, wife of the commander-in-chief of the King Śrīyajña Śātakarni, in that king's seventh year, after it had been excavated many years before by Vopaki, an ascetic, but had remained unfinished. Beyond this there was still another Vihāra numbered 17 of very irregular shape and decorated with sculpture of a date probably four centuries later of the cave mentioned last.[69] The Vihāra had no inscription, but from its sculpture and the form of its pillars its date may be assigned to about the year 600 or later. The Caitya-Hall at Nāsik was of about the same age as the small vihāra (circa B.C. 160) close by, and that the Andhra king Kṛṣṇa, during whose reign the latter was excavated, was reigning at the beginning of the second century B.C. But the form of the entrance doorway, the lotus design on the face of its jambs, miniature Persepolitan pilasters, the rails of the balustrade flanking the steps and the treatment of the dvārapāla-figure beside the entrance in the caitya cave, bespeak a date approximately contemporary with the Sāñcī toraṇas and at least a century later than the work of Bārhut.[70]

PANDULENA

An inscription recorded the gift of a cave and a water-cistern to monks residing in one of the caves excavated by Ṛṣbhadata, a Śaka and son-in-law of a Śaka ruler who was known to have been ousted by Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi in A.C. 124, on the Tri-raśmi Mountain, i.e.,

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Pandulena caves at Nāsik.[71] It narrated that "the son-in-law of the Kṣaharata King Kṣatrapa Nahapāna, Dinika's son Ṛṣabhadata or Uṣabhadata who has given three hundred thousand cows—who gave gold to establish a tīrtha on the river Bārāṇasa—who gave sixteen villages to gods and Brāhmaṇas—who annually causes to be fed one hundred thousand Brāhmaṇas—who has given wives to eight Brahmaṇas at the holy tīrtha of Prabhāsa)—who has built quadrangular rest-houses at different places and who has made gardens, tanks and drinking fountains—who has established for the sake of spiritual merit ferries with boats on the rivers and has erected on both banks of these rivers rest-houses and places for the distribution of water—who has given in the village one thousand as the price of 32 cocoanut trees for the benefit of Caraka (?) congregations at (places named)—has caused this cave and these cisterns to be made on Mount Tri-raśmi. And he, i.e. Ṛṣabhadata himself, went in the rainy season to liberate a chief who was besieged by the Malayas and they fled before the roar (of his army)···. Afterwards he proceeded to Puṣkara and bathed there and gave three thousand calves and a village. He bought a field for 4,000 (kahāpaṇas), that lay to the north-west of the boundaries of the town belonging to his father. Out of this the Saṅgha of the Four Quarters, dwelling in the leṇa of his gift, will obtain their provisions".[72] This epigraphic record further described how dispositions of pecuniary gifts to the monks residing in his guhā-monastery built by him were made by him, e.g., 3,000 Kārṣāpaṇas for provision of clothes and Kaṣana were deposited in two parts with two merchant-guilds of the neighbouring town of Govardhana—2,000 with one weavers' guild at an interest of 75 Kārṣāpaṇas ; the

71. Sen, A. C. Buddhist Remains in India (New Delhi, 1956), pp. 118-119.

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AJANTĀ

The Ajantā caves which are of various sizes numbering about twenty-nine represent the finest specimens of architecture and painting. They were excavated in the hard volcanic rock. The walls, the ceilings, and the pillars of nearly all the caves were once decorated with paintings, remains of which are found only in thirteen caves. The paintings depicted primarily scenes from the life of Buddha and the Jātakas, but many of them were of a secular nature too. The court-life of the period and scenes of everyday life were graphically described in the frescoes. Indian painting reached its finest development in the 5th and 6th centuries A.C., and the best may be seen at Ajantā. Vihāras here were excavated by both the Hīnayānists and the Mahāyānists. The central group of the four earliest caves at Ajantā formed the nucleus from which the caves radiated south-east and south-west—eight in one direction and fourteen in the other. There was probably a pause in the excavation of caves after the first great endeavour and then they were extended, for sometime at least, in a south-west direction. Thus Caves Nos. 14 to 20 formed a tolerably consecutive series, without any remarkable break.

73. Report of the Archaeological Survey of Western India, vol, iv, p. 103.

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After that, or it may be contemporaneously with the last mentioned, may be grouped Nos. 8, 7 and 6 and lastly Nos. 21 to 26 at one end of the series, and Nos. 1 to 5 at the other, formed the latest and most ornate group of the whole series. The four caves in the centre were certainly anterior to the Christian Era. The Cave No. 1 was a splendid example of Mahāyāna architecture and decorative skill—its main feature being the elaborate facade, the portico with a chamber at each end and an elaborately carved door and six columns with figures of flying Gandharvas (Celestial musicians) and Apsarās (Female attendants of Indra). Cave no. 4 was the largest complete Vihāra, noted for the carving of Padmapāṇi Bodhisattva and men and women flying from an elephant, while the No. 6 was the only two-storeyed Vihāra. Nos. 8 and 9 were very old (100 B.C.) probably belonging to the Hīnayānists. The Cave no. 10 being contemporary with the gateways at Sāñcī and associated with Nos. 12 and 13 was the oldest Vihāra at Ajantā, which consisted of a square hall, 36 ft. 7 in. each way without any pillars or internal supports. It had three cells on the right hand side, and four cells on each of the other two faces. Towards the face of the rock it had one doorway, with a window on each side. The only ornaments in this cave were seven horse-shoe arches on the left hand side and front, four over the doorways of the cells, and three over false doorways. On the right hand side, where the residence of the abbot seems to have been, there were only three cells being much more richly decorated, though in the same style.[74] After this first endeavour, however, came the break mentioned above, for Nos. 11, 14 and 15, which may be ascribed to a period of next three centuries, were comparatively of less importance either in extent or ornamentation. The Cave No. 11 at Ajantā was probably the earliest example

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of the introduction of pillars into excavated vihāras, but there appeared to be a phase of hesitancy and natural vacillation before the system became fully a co-ordinated expression, forming at once a pleasuring and utilitarian feature and adding to the interior effect of the hall.[75] Apart from these there were two viharas, Nos. 16 and 17, were the most neatly decorated and interesting in the series. The No. 16 was a twenty-pillared cave, measuring about 65 ft. each way, with sixteen cells and a regular sanctuary, in which was found a figure of Buddha seated with his feet down. Its walls were decorated with frescoes representing scenes from the legends of Buddha's life, past and present. The Cave No. 17 which was known as the Zodiac Cave due to a figure of a Buddhist 'bhava-cakra' or 'wheel of life' painted at the left end of its verandah was almost similar in plan. On both these caves there were long inscriptions which may epigraphically placed in about A.C. 500 or possibly a little earlier.[76] We may, therefore, approximately date these two caves in the end of the 5th century. The Caves Nos. 18,19 and 20 succeeded this group, both in position and in style and probably occupied the first half of the 6th century in construction, bringing down the history to about A. C. 550. After these, were excavated Nos. 8, 7 and 6. The last one was a two-storeyed cave at Ajantā, while the No. 7 possessed an elegant verandah, broken by projecting pavilions. It resembling, Cave No. 15 at Nasik wassmall internally and covered by a whole pantheon of Buddhas.[77] Among the first five caves at the south-east end and the six last at the western, we find that one of these was a caitya and remaining ten were vihāras of greater or less dimensions. The Caves No. 4 and 24 of this series were found to be left in a

75. Majumdar, R. C. ed. History and Culture of the Indian People, vol. iii, (The Classical Age), p. 475.

76. Archaeological Survey of Western India, vol. iv, pp. 53, 128.

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very incomplete condition, although these were intended to have been the finest of the group. The Cave No. 4 had 28 pillars. Its hall was about 87 ft. square, and save the cells it was almost finished. But the Cave No. 24, though the next largest, was planned with 20 pillars and a hall 73¼ ft. wide by 75 ft. deep—and inside, only the front aisle had been advanced towards completion, the pillars in the back and sides being only roughly blocked out. The verandah, however, had been sculptured in a style showing that it was intended to be one of the most highly finished monasteries in the group. The Caves Nos. 1 and 2 were the most richly sculptured ones. The facade of No. 1 was, indeed, the most elaborate and beautiful of its class at Ajantā.[78]

ELLORĀ

The "vast amphitheatre of rock-cut temples" at Ellorā, a few miles from Ajantā, was indeed pleasant to observe. The Buddhist caves which were at the southern extremity of the locality and belonged to about A. C. 550 and 750, deserved special attention. Unlike other cave-monasteries they were excavated in the sloping sides of a hill and not in a perpendicular cliff. Compared with Brāhmanical caves, they were rather austere and solemn. The first Cave, probably the oldest was a Vihāra consisting of eight cells, while the Cave No. 12 had a large open court in front, through which one could come in the Monastery. Steps of 115ft. ×43ft. with three rows of columns which were divided into three aisles by means of three rows of pillars led to the great Vihāra. The middle storey had an elaborately carved shrine with two fine dvārapālas guarding the door. Of the Buddhist group the principal cave (No. 10) was the so called Viśvakarmā, the only Caitya of the series.[79] In this cave,

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instead of the great simple semi-circular window over the entrance, the opening was divided into three compartments, something like what we call a venetian window, and represented a form of architecture more removed from the wooden original than any other example of a caitya cave. The canopies over the side-windows also were so modern that it seems impossible to carry the date of their execution beyond the 7th or 8th century, while it may even be more modern. The main Vihāra attached to and contemporary with this Caitya was that called Mahārwārā (No. 5), being 110 ft. deep by 70 ft. wide, including the side recesses—its defect being the lowness of the roof.[80] In form also it was an exception. It looked more like a flat-roofed caitya, with its three aisles, than an ordinary vihāra. It is to be noted that at Bedsā was found one of the earliest complete vihāras looking like a caitya in plan and here was observed one of the latest, showing the same confusion of ideas. Close to the Viśvakarmā, was a small and beautiful vihāra (No. 8), in which the sanctuary stood free, with a passage all round it, as in some of the Buddhist caves at Aurangabad and in Saiva caves further on. The details, however, of its architecture were the same as in the great cave. Communicating with this one was a small square vihāra (No. 7), the roof of which had been supported by four pillars of the same detail as in the Dukhya-garh, which was the cave next the caitya on the north ; but though surrounded by cells it had no sanctuary or images, Higher up the hill than these were two others (Nos. 6 and 9), containing numerous cells, and one with a very handsome hall, the outer half of which had unfortunately fallen in. In the sanctuaries of both of these caves were figures of the Buddhas sitting with their feet down. Neither of these caves had been completed. There was still another group of these

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small vihāras (Nos. 2, 3, 4) further to the south, called the Dherwārā or 'low caste's' quarter.[81] The first was square, with twelve pillars on the same plan as those at Ajantā ; the lateral galleries contained figures of Buddha, all like the one in the sanctuary, sitting with their feet down, and there were only two cells on each side of the sanctuary. The next cave was similar in plan, though the detail was more like that of the Viśvakarmā. It consisted of eleven cells. The last one was a small simple Vihāra with cells. The two vihāras, north of the Viśvakarmā, were specially interesting, as these pointed out the successive steps by which the Buddhist caves merged into the forms of the Brahmanical. The first was No. 11, the Don Tal or Dukhya-garh, a Buddhist vihāra of which the lower storey was long completely silted up—hence it got its name 'two storeyed', though it was actually a three-storeyed one. In 1877 the ground-floor was excavated, consisting of verandah of 90 ft. in length, with a shrine and the commencement of two cells. It was strictly Buddhist in all its details and showed no more tendency towards Brahmanism than what was found in the Viśvakarmā. Its three storeys had been left unfinished. The next, or Tin Tal (No. 12) was very similar to the last in arrangement, but it was more commodious of the two, and its numerous sculptures were Buddhist, though deviating from the usual forms by a large representation of the female divinities of the Mahāyāna pantheon. A rock-cut gateway led to an open court at the far end of which rose a facade in three elaborate storeys, each with a verandah on eight square pillars. Each storey was, however, differently disposed in the interior. The facade, rising to a height of nearly 50 ft., though severely plain, offered majesty to the exterior appearance of the cave. Fergusson wrote : "Of its class, this cave is one of the most important

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KĀNHERĪ

Yet the most extensive monk-settlement in the Western Ghāts was at Kānherī (Kṛṣnagiri), about twenty-five miles from Bombay. It consisted of a number of caves excavated in one large bubble of a hill.[83] The earliest settlers of the monasteries at Kānherī, were the monks professing the Theravāda doctrine. The beginning of the rough-hewn residential caves here may be dated at least a century before the reign of Gautamīputra Yajñaśrī Sātakarṇi (A.C. 150-189), although the earliest available epigraphic evidence discovered so far in this locality was related to him.[84] To maintain a big monastic establishment like that of Kānherī, the gifts to it, by the laity must have been innumerable. One such donation was made by Ṛṣbhadata or Uṣabhadata who was a Śaka and not a Buddhist by faith, and who was a son-in-law of a Śaka ruler.[85] During the early half of the ninth century Kānherī also flourished as a centre of Buddhist learning. Several grants were made for establishing monasteries and monastic libraries at Kānherī. Part of the donation of Bhadraviṣṇu, offered to a Buddhist monastery at

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JUNNAR

Around the old town of Junnar, about 48 miles north from Poona, are some five separate groups of caves. The area may have the largest monastic establishment in Western India. The frequency and smallness of the cells show that this belonged to an early period. The inscriptions on certain caves indicated that they were meant for followers of certain Buddhist Schools. These inscriptions seem to range palaeographically from about B.C. 100 to A.C. 300.[89] Here in the Gaṇeśa Group is found a vihāra, quite equal to the finest at that place.

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But the largest, finest and most magnificent example of the cave-monastery may be found in the one well-preserved at Kārle, about a half-way between Poona and Bombay on the right hand side of the Valley. The Kārle cave was excavated at a time when the style was in its greatest purity. We find in it that all the architectural defects of the former caves were avoided and pillars of the nave here were quite perpendicular.[91] The screen was ornamented with sculpture. The caitya-hall of Kārle was planned of the same general pattern as that at Bhājā and was 124 feet 3 inches in length, about 45 feet 6 inches in width and 40 feet in height.[92] On each side were fifteen monolithic

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While discussing about the date of the Vihāra, Fergusson wrote: "I think it probable that its age is antecedent to the Christian era; and at the same time, it cannot possibly have been excavated than two hundred years before that era".[94] From an inscription we learn that this cave-monastery was excavated by one Bhūtapāla, a merchant of Vejayantī (in Mahārāṣṭra) and was regarded as the most excellent rock mansion in Jambudvīpa. The Inscription ran as follows: "Rock-mansion established by Bhūtapāla, seṭṭhī from Vejayantī, the best in Jambudvīpa".[95] The principal monastery was of three tiers in height, with simple cells, without any interval colonnades, only the upper one possessed a verandah; the lower ones may really have been constructed with this usual appendage, but great masses of the rock above had given way, and falling down, had carried with them the whole of the fronts. Its two-storeyed facade with an enormous sun-window covered a massive vestibule. In another epigraphic record it is found that Ṛṣabhadatta made the gift of revenue of a village to the monks of Kārle (Velūraka) enabling them to "spend the time" (japanatha) which alluded probably to vassāvāsa.[96] The donation showed that the Kārle Vihāra was then inhabited by the monks of the Theravāda Sect. But an inscription of a later age recorded that instead of temporary vassāvāsa, the monks began to permanently settle down there and donation was made of a village to a Buddhist Order by the Sātavāhana

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KONDĀNE

Further, about ten miles north-west from Kārle, in a ravine of the Western Ghats, were the Kondāne Caitya cave and vihāra. The Caitya-hall here deserved special attention, as its facade was almost a literal reproduction of the wooden form.[98] Its dimensions differed slightly from those of the Bhājā Caitya, being 66½ ft., from the line of the front pillars to the extremity of the apse, 26 ft. 8 in. wide, 28 ft. 5 in. high to the crown of the arch; the nave was 14 ft. 8 in. wide, surrounded by thirty pillars—most of which had rotted away but which inclined inwards as did the side-walls of the aisles. The Stūpa inside was 9 ft. in diameter with a capital, as that at Bhājā, of about double the usual height. The Vihāra in one storey on the left side of the caitya hall at Kondāne was also a remarkable one. It was one of the rare exceptions of the Theravāda type in which the central hall was not plain, but pillared. The exterior was a very interesting production, as it originally consisted of a pillared portico, the end walls of which still remain. Projecting over this portico was a massive cornice, together with a feature corresponding to an entablature, every detail of which was a true copy of intricate wooden construction. Within the portico was seen a screen wall with square-headed openings, forming the doorway and a window on each side. Inside was a large hall measuring 23 feet by 29 feet, encircled by a colonnade, and with cells opening out from the three interior sides. The pillars of

97. Lüders. List of Brāhmī Inscriptions from the earliest times to about 400 A. D. (Calcutta, 1910), no. 1,100.

98. Archaeological Survey of Western India, vol. iv (Report on the Buddhist cave temples and their inscriptions, by JAS. Burgess. Varanasi, Indological Book House, 1964), p. 9.

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the colonnade supported roof-beams with bridging joists and other structural details.

BEDSĀ

The Guhā-monastery at Bedsā, about eleven miles south of Kārle, which belonged to a slightly later period than the Bhājā caves showed a considerable progress towards lithic construction. The Bedsā Vihāra provided three cells with stone beds in the verandah of the caitya, and a fourth was commenced, when apparently it was determined to remove the residence a little further off, and no instance, occured afterwards in which they were so conjoined, till at least a very late date.[99] Its cells were ranged round an apsidal central hall which resembled the great hall at Kārle, though somewhat smaller. It had four pillars, each twenty-five feet high, with carvings of horses, bulls and elephants mounted by male and female riders. Its ribbed roof was supported by twenty-six octagonal pillars, ten feet high. We find that in the cave nearly the whole of the ornamentation was made up of miniature rails, and repetitions of window fronts. It had further a semi-circular open work moulding like the basket-work, which may be observed in the earliest cave only. But such a work evidently was unsuitable for stone-work and that is why it was abandoned later.

BHĀJĀ

The oldest cave-monastery in Western India dating from the second century B. C. were, however, found at Bhājā, near Poona. These were probably imitations of a wooden prototype as was evident from the inward slope of the pillars, the wooden roof girders and the free use of timber. The octagonal pillars near the

99. Fergusson, James. History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, vol. i (1967 ed.), p. 179.

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walls were simple. The Stūpa, the shapely dome which stood on high circular platform (vedikā), inside the caitya hall was very plain and in two parts, probably relieved, when originally built, by frescoes of which there is little trace at present. Thus the earliest cave in Western India was presumably a small vihāra at Bhājā, which was unique of its kind being located in the green hills of the Western Ghats to the south of Bombay. It faced north and consisted of a verandah 17½ ft. in length by 7 ft. wide at the east end and 9½ ft. at the west, with a hall, also of somewhat irregular form, 16 ft. deep by 16 ft. 7 in. across, exclusive of a bench 21 in. broad along the east side. The ground-plan of the vihāra showed the arrangement of the four cells entering from the hall and one from the verandah, in three of which were stone beds ; besides, there were three cells, or cubicles, with a separate entrance outside the verandah to the left, each with its stone bed—usually an indication of early date.[100] The last cave to the south possessed some sculptural representations, including a prince seated on an elephant, a prince in a chariot and three armed figures. The 'dancing couple' was another fine specimen of sculpture. Thus with the earliest beginning Bhājā represented some typical characteristics of the cave-monasteries in Western India.

Northern and Western India from a very early period became the concourse of many cultural movements. Hence the Buddhists with their developed brains, artistic tastes, strict monastic discipline and fine craftsmanship erected the magnificent vihāras in these parts of India. It may be that the monasteries dating from Buddha's life-time are wanting here, yet the ruins of many old and renowned vihāras present some unique examples of monastic architecture. The Buddhist monasteries really

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100. Fergusson, James. History of Indian and Eastern Architecture (1967 ed.), vol. i, p. 177.

found healthy resorts in Uttarāpatha and in Aparānta and followed a course of gradual development and embellishment. Among them, however, the rock-cut cave-monasteries of Western India with their architectural features, superb expressions and pleasant location were really note-worthy. They did not come into existence in a single day or were the outcome of the labour of a single person, but months after months were spent in their constructional activities and thousands of experts were employed to supervise them. They have passed through a long career of gradual progress. We can conclude that the earliest of all the Chaitya halls "excavated were those at Bhājā, Kondāne, and Pitalkhorā, together with the tenth cave at Ajantā; that next to them in chronological order came the hall at Bedsā; then the ninth cave at Ajantā, followed closely by the Chaitya at Nāsik, and lastly, the great hall at Kārli".[101]

101. Rapson, E. J. The Cambridge history of India, vol. i, p. 577.

Chapter Four

VIHĀRAS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN INDIA

The Buddhist monasteries which were scattered on the plains of Central India[1] and Eastern India[2] belonged to the earliest as well as to the latest periods of the monastic architecture. Some of them, therefore, were simple, austere, and unattractive, while many others became highly developed and ornamental. With a modest beginning during the life-time of Buddha these monastic dwellings had to suffer several vicissitudes. They had the experience of liberal patronage on the one hand, and of

1. For our purpose in this dissertation we have utilised the definition supplied by the Chinese pilgrims, of Central India (Madhyadeśa). The Chinese authors described it as a tract of land comprising the whole of the Gangetic provinces from Thāneśvara to the head of the Delta, and from the Himalaya mountains to the banks of the Narmadā. (Majumdar, S. N. ed. Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, p. 14).

2. It is to be noted that specific information about the boundaries of Eastern India (Prācya) is badly needed in the early texts. Eastern India was only suggested by the boundary of Central India. We may, however, following the Chinese authority, say that Eastern India included Assam and Bengal proper with the whole of the Gangetic Delta "together with Sambalpur, Orissa and Ganjam." (Majumdar, S. N. ed. Cuningham's Ancient Geography of India, p. 14)

utter destruction on the other hand. But it is to be noted that most of these monasteries with only few exceptions, were erected on the plains unlike the Guhā-monasteries of Western India. Here "on plan the Vihāra was a rectangular courtyard, enclosed by a brick wall. In the centre was a stone-paved hall with a roof supported by stone-pillars. All round the enclosure abutting the outer walls was a row of cells for the monks often with a verandah in front. Some of the cells were used as store-rooms, a few as shrines and there was usually one large room which served as refactory."[3] Thus from their architectural point of view as well as from chronological standpoint these monasteries differ greatly from those founded in other parts of this vast country. A study of such monk-settlements according to their geographical distribution will be useful enough to have an idea of the evolution of Buddhist monastic life as also of the monastic architecture in Central and Eastern India.

STHĀNEŚVARA

Forming the western boundary of the Madhyadeśa from a very early period Sthāneśvara or Sthānīśvara which had been identified, according to the Buddhist literature, with a Brāhmaṇa village called Thūna[4] became an important centre. Hiuen-Tsang recorded that there were three Saṅghārāmas in this country, with about seven hundred priests who belonged to the Little Vehicle[5]. Here to the north-west of the city the Pilgrim observed a Stūpa which was about 300 feet high and was built by Aśoka, the emperor. The bricks which were used for constructing the Stūpa were all of a yellowish red colour, very bright and shining. Curiously enough he further noticed that the Stūpa frequently emitted a brilliant light, and

3. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 71, 1938, p. 6.

4. Sacred Book of the East, vol. xvii (Vinaya Texts), pp. 38-39; Mahāvagga, v. 13, 12.

5. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the western world, vol. i, p. 183.

many spiritual prodigies exhibited themselves. Going south of the city about 100 li, he came to a convent called GOVINDA (Kuhwān-ch'a) where were towers with overlapping storeys, with intervals between them for walking. The resident-monks of this convent were virtuous, well-mannered and possessed of quiet dignity. The Chinese record, thus, helped us to assume that ancient Sthāneśvara (Sa-t'a-ni-shi-fa-lo) and its neighbourhood became a notable Buddhist place with some monasteries and well-trained monks who preached the Theravāda doctrines.

MATIPURĀ

Hiuen-Tsang saw in Matipurā (Ma-ti-pu-lo) also about ten Buddhist monasteries with approximately eight hundred Brethren who were adherents of the Sarvāstivāda School of the Hīnayāna (Little Vehicle)[6]. Four or five li to the south of the capital there was a little Saṅghārāma with about fifty Brethren in it. Guṇaprabha, the master of the Śāstras, composed in this Vihāra the "Tattva-vibhaṅga Śāstra" (Pin-chin) and other treatises, amounting to about one hundred in all. He was originally a native of Parvata, and became a student of the Great Vehicle, but before he had penetrated into its deep principles he had occasion to study the Vibhāṣā Śāstra, on which he overthrew from his former work and attached himself to the Little Vehicle. He wrote several books to overpower the Great Vehicle, and thus became a zealous partisan of the Hinayāna School[7]. Three or four li to the north of the Saṅghārāma of Guṇaprabha was another great Saṅghārāma with about two hundred disciples in it, who studied the literature of the Little Vehicle. It was here Saṅghabhadra (Chung-hin), a native of Kāśmīra, who had understood

6. Beal, S. The life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 79. But according to the SI-YU-KI there were about twenty Buddhist monasteries with 800 priests in Matipura.

7. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. i, p. 191.

thoroughly the Vibhāṣā Śāstra of the Sarvāstivāda School, ended the years of his life. With such an account we may conclude that during the seventh century A. C. Matipura which was located in Madawar or Mundor[8] in Western Rohilkhand, eight miles north of Bijnor and thirty miles to the south of Hardwar, was a great centre of Buddhism and Buddhistic learning with some well-known monasteries.

AYODHYĀ

Inspite of the paucity of archaeological evidences we may assume that ancient Ayodhyā was a great centre of Buddhism and many monasteries were established there.[9] The Chinese records helped us much in such a conjecture. But Fa-Hien did not see there Buddhist vihāras ; he observed that the Buddhists and the Brāhmaṇas were not in good terms in Ayodhyā during the 5th century A. C. He was said to have seen here a tope where the four Buddhas walked and sat.[10] Hiuen-Tsang, on the other hand, noticed one hundred Buddhist monasteries in the country and about 3,000 Brethren who studied both the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna texts. According to him, in the capital there was an old Saṅghārāma where Vasubandhu wrote his treatises for the good of the community. Beside it, there were ruined walls of a hall in which Vasubandhu explained the religious doctrines. Four or five li to the north of the city, and by the side of the river Ganges was another great Saṅghārāma with an Aśokan Stūpa of 200 ft. height.[11] There was also an old Saṅghārāma where Asaṅga who was the brother of Vasubandhu and wrote many śāstras, explained the Law. This Chinese

8. Dey, N. L. Geographical dictionary of ancient and mediaeval India, p. 128 ; Majumdar, S. N. Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, p. 399.

9. Saṃyuttanikāya, iii, p. 140 ff. ; Sāratthappakāsinī, ii, p. 320.

10. Legge. Travels of Fa-Hien, pp. 54-55.

11. Beal, S. The life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 85.

Pilgrim came across with an other old Saṅghārāma at a distance of 40 li to the north-west of the ruins of the preaching-hall of Asaṅga. This monastery had also a brick-stūpa which was about 100 ft. high.[12] But we find no ruins of such Buddhist vihāras at present in Ayodhyā. Archaelogical investigation may be useful to trace their location.

MATHURĀ

Inscriptions on the body of the figures of two lions which were discovered in Śītalā Temple of Mathurā showed that there were a Saṅghārāma, a Stūpa and a cave monastery which were erected during the reign of Mahākṣatrapa Rajula in the later half of the first century A.C. But no details of this Vihāra were available. During the 7th century A.C. Hiuen-Tsang observed in Mathurā the 'Mountain-Saṅghārāma,' a 20 ft. high and 30 ft. broad cave and 24 or 25 li (about five miles) away one stūpa. This 'Mountain-Saṅghārāma' may be a 7th century edition of the cave-monastery mentioned above. If that is true, then it is evident that during these seven centuries there existed in Mathurā a Buddhist Vihāra. But as no ruins of it are discovered yet, it is difficult to assign a definite location to it.

MĀLAVA

Frequent references in the inscriptions have been made to Mālava[13] which probably comprised the region round Ujjayinī and Bhilsā (modern Malwa).[14] The Mālava country (Mo-la-p'o) of Hiuen-Tsang may be identified with Mālavaka or Mālavaka-āhāra, mentioned in a number of Valabhī grants as included in the kingdom of the Maitrakas of Valabhī. It was about 6000 li in circuit

12. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the western world, vol. i, p. 228.
13. Epigraphia Indica, ii, pp. 18-19 ; v, p. 229 ; viii, p, 44.
14. Law. B. C. Historical geography of ancient India, p. 322.

and its capital was some 30 li round. It was defended by the Mahī river on the south and east. The people of this country in their manner were polished and agreeable. They loved the fine arts. During the period of Hiuen-Tsang's visit the two countries Mālava on the south-west and Māgadha on the north-east, in India became remarkable for the great learning, polite language and finished conversation of the people. Hiuen-Tsang noticed about one hundred saṅghārāmas in Mālava, with 20,000 priests[15] who studied the texts of the Small Vehicle and belonged to the Sāmmatiya School.[16]

UJJAYINĪ

The ancient city of Ujjayinī (Pali. Ujjenī, Greek Ozene), the capital of Avantī, was in Buddha's time one of the principal halting places on the Dakṣiṇāpatha.[17] But it became a prominent seat of learning in Central India under the Gupta monarchs. It was also a stronghold of Buddhism. Several of the most earnest and zealous adherents of this religion like Abhayakumāra, Isiḍāsī, Dhammapāla, Soṇakūṭikaṇṇa, Mahākaccāyana[18] and others were either born or resided in Avantī. Hiuen-Tsang saw here several saṅghārāmas which were mostly in ruins; some three or five were preserved.[19] There were about three hundred Brethren who followed the doctrines both of the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna.

DHAMNĀR

There also existed a great vihāra at Dhamnār. This monastic establishment was erected during the transitional

15. But according to S. Beal's Buddhist Records etc. (ii, p. 261) there were some 2000 priests in the monasteries in Mālava.

16. Beal, S. The life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 148.

17. Rhys-Davids, T. W. Buddhist India (1955 ed.), p 53.

18. Saṃyuttanikāya, iii, p. 9 ; iv. 117 ; Aṅguttaranikāya, i, 23; v, 46, Majjhimanikāya, iii, p. 223.

19. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the western world, vol, ii, p. 270.

phase. Next to this is one called the "Great Kacheri"; but it is only a six-celled vihāra, with a hall about 25 ft. square, encumbered by four pillars on its floor; and near the caitya above alluded to was a similar hall, but smaller and without cells.

KHOLVI

At Kholvi which lies more than 60 miles north of Ujjain and that of Dhamnār about 22 miles further north there was also founded a vihāra that consisted of one large hall, called 'Bhīma's House,' measuring 42 ft. by 22 ft.; but it had no cells and was much more like that what would be called a sālā at Bāgh than a monastery. The others were mere cells and were of less architectural significance.[20]

SĀÑCĪ

Sāñcī which is situated twenty miles north-east of Bhūpāl in Central India[21] is the site of the most extensive Buddhist remains now known in India. The ancient name of Sāñcī, as we find in the inscriptions discovered here, was Kākanāva or Kākanāya; later on it appeared as Kākanāda or Kākanādāboṭa[22], and still later at the end of the seventh century A.C. as Boṭa-Śrī-Parvvata. Sāñcī was referred to under the name Cetiyagiri in the Mahāvaṃsa, the Buddhist Chronicle of Ceylon. It is curious enough to note that the Chinese Pilgrims who were such a mine of information regarding other Buddhist sites passed by this place in silence. The history of Sāñcī started during the reign of Aśoka in the third century B.C., and covered a period of some thirteen centuries. The Mahāvaṁsa recorded that Aśoka, when he was heir-

20. Cunningham, A. Archaeological Reports, vol. ii, pp. 270-288.
21. Cunningham, A. The Bhilsa Topes, p. 183.
22. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. iii, 31; Lūders. List of Brahmi Inscriptions, etc., no. 350.

apparent and was journeying as Viceroy to Ujjayinī, halted at Vidiśā on his way from Pāṭaliputra and there married the beautiful daughter of a local banker, one Devī by name, by whom he had two sons, Ujjenīya and Mahendra[23], and a daughter Saṅghamitrā. Further it is stated that, after Aśoka's accession, Mahendra headed the Buddhist mission, sent probably under the auspices of the emperor, to Ceylon, and that before setting out to the island he visited his mother at Cetiyagiri near Vidiśā, and was there taken by her to a grand Vihāra, which she herself founded[24]. Whether the story is true or not, the fact remains that the earliest monuments at Sāñcī dated from the time of Aśoka, Constantine of Buddhism, who turned the place into an active centre of the religion of Gautama Buddha and was responsible for the splendour of the site in days gone by. But unfortunately there is no trace of this earliest monastery at Sāñcī at present. The chief fascination of Sāñcī, no doubt, rested on the grand old stūpas including the Great Stūpa, not only on account of their sanctity but also because of their rich and elaborate carvings. The fascination, however, was vastly enhanced by the shrines and monasteries that clustered around them and offered a clear picture of monastic life on this peaceful hill top. Among these, the most noteworthy was the Caitya Hall (Temple No. 18), situated directly opposite the south gateway of the Great Stūpa, and was especially interesting as one of the few examples of structural edifices of this kind. In an inscription carved on the balustrade of the Great Stūpa, dated in the year 93 of the Gupta era (A.C. 412-13) we find that there was then a monastery at Sāñcī. It recorded the gift by one of Candragupta's officers Āmrakāradeva, son of Undāna and evidently a man

23. According to another Buddhist tradition, Mahendra was the brother and not the son of Aśoka without having any connection with Vidiśā.

24. Marshall, John and Foucher, Alfred. The Monuments of Sañchi ed. by N. G. Majumdar, vol. i, pp. 14-15.

with a very high rank, of a hamlet known Iśvaravāsaka and of a sum of money to the Ārya-Saṅgha of the faithful at the Vihāra of Kākanāda-bhoṭa, with a view to feeding the bhikkhus and maintaing lamps[25]. Another gift to the same monastery was made a few years later by a lady called Harisvāminī, wife of Somasiddha. It was dated A.C. 450-451 during the reign of a later Gupta king Kumargupta I. Besides such literary as well as inscriptional references, we find the remains of some of the monasteries that were located in Sāñcī. These vihāras, though now are in ruins, ranged in date from the 4th to the 12th century A.C. In the 'southern area' of the present site of Sāñ.ī there were the remains of three monasteries numbered 36, 37 and 38, which were built approximately on the same plan being small editions of the self-contained monasteries of the north-west of India and which consisted of a square courtyard surrounded by cells on the four sides, with a pillared verandah around the court, "a raised platform in the centre of it, and in some cases an additional chamber outside. The entrance passed through the middle chamber in one of the sides, and was flanked without by projecting turrets. The upper storey was probably constructed largely of timber, the lower storey being of drystone masonry."[26]. These three monasteries belonged to the mediaeval period, No. 36 being nearer to the centre was the earliest one. Next appeared No. 38 and the last monastery erected there was No. 37. The building-work in the Monastery No. 36 was rather rough. There was, in the middle of the courtyard of this monastery, a square platform which was covered with a layer of brick and lime concrete. Round the outer edge of this platform there was a low wall on which stood the columns of the verandah. The staircase which pro-

25. Fleet. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, iii, No. 4 ; Allan Catalogue of the Gupta Coins, p. xxxv.

26. Marshall, Sir John. A Guide to Sanchi (1955 ed.), p. 129.

bably gave access to the upper floor was erected in the north-west corner. From the court water was run through an underground passage at the south-west corner. The Monastery had its entrance on its eastern side. But the Monastery No. 37 was more spacious than the former one and was neater and better laid than in the latter. Its walls were provided with footings on the outside. Four square stone blocks were built into the corners of the platform to support the pillars of the verandah. There were some unusual chambers at the rear of the cells on the southern and western sides of this Monastery which was probably founded during the seventh century A.C. The Monastery No. 38 like the first one of this group was built of singularly rough and uneven masonry. There was evidently an earlier structure in this spot, of which some of the stone foundations still remain. The brick wall in the central chamber on the northern side may also be added at a later date. Instead of the usual elevated platform in the middle of the courtyard of this Monastery there was a square depression, like the one in a Roman atrium, with a raised verandah round it[27]. In the south-west corner there was the staircase which gave access to the upper storey. The most note-worthy of the monastic establishments, however, now occupies the higher part of the plateau on the east. Thus we find that in the 'eastern area' of the ruins of present Sāñcī lay the mediaeval monasterics numbered 44, 45, 46 and 47. There was also a Temple which dated from the 10th or 11th century of the Christian era. Probably two or three centuries earlier this on the same spot another shrine with an open quadrangle in front, containing numerous sepulchral monuments and being encircled by ranges of cells for the bhikkhus, had been erected. The remains of the earlier one may be found at a lower level than the

27. Marshall, John and Foucher, Alfred, The Monuments of Sañchi ; ed. by N. G. Majumdar, vol. i, pp. 68-69.

later. At a subsequent date, however, the shrine was erected on the eastern side of the quadrangle, along with the platform in front of it, and the cells and verandahs flanking it on the north and south. The cells of the earlier monastery were of dry-stone masonry of the small neat variety in vogue at the time and their foundations were carried down as much as nine feet to the bed-rock. The corner cells were approachable by an open passage that separated the two cells; the quadrangle had also another passage as its entrance. In front of the cells there was a verandah which was about eight feet broad, raised about eight inches above the rest of the court and separated from it by a stone kerb which was divided at regular intervals by square blocks which served as bases for the pillars of the verandah. On the other hand there were two wings, each containing three cells, with verandah in front, to the north and south of the later temple. The door-jambs of the two cells nearest the temple were decorated with carvings which resembled those on the doorway of the temple itself. But it is to be noted that some of the pillars belonging to the earlier monastery in this site were utilised in constructing the verandah of these wings. To the north and west sides of the court in front of the Temple No. 45 in the eastern area there was another monastery which was not erected until after this temple had been reconstructed. This monastic establishment which comprised two courts cannot be assigned to an earlier date than the eleventh century A.C. It is still in a relatively good condition of preservation, portions of the roof and some pillars being still preserved in situ. The quadrangles of both the courts were paved with massive stone slabs. Below the pavement in the larger court were discovered many architectural findings of an earlier period including a column in the Gupta style. Still lower down were brought to light three successive floors which probably belonged to earlier monasteries built on the same site, but, inasmuch as the lowest of them was not of the pre-Gupta era.

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BĀGH

The ruins of a few guhā-monasteries that are situated in the south of Malwā (Mālava), about 25 miles south-west of Dhar at the confluence of the Wāgh or Bāgh and Girna streams on an old main route close to the Udaipur Ghāt, twelve miles north of Kukṣī,[28] represented a peculiar monastic architectural form which is visible only in the cave-dwellings on the Western Ghāts. This group comprised eight or nine vihāras, some of them of the largest class, but no caitya hall, nor did any excavation of that class seem ever to had been attempted here.[29] It is to be noted that not a single inscription which may give a clue to the history of these Bāgh Caves is found. The caves at Bāgh were hewn out of sandstone rocks which happened to be topped by a deep band of clay-stone. Perhaps the heavy weight of this top-layer and seepage of water through it must have ruined most of the caves with their porticos and sculptured facades. But the remains still offer the wonderful specimens of mural painting. The Bāgh frescos are taken by competent authorities "to be contemporaneous with the later Ajantā frescos. In craftsmanship they are similar. Their mastery over spontaneous technique of mural painting is no less. They have the same mood of reserve in the midst of joy.... But, while the Ajantā frescos are more religious in theme, depicting incidents from the previous lives of the Buddha with their human associations, the Bāgh frescos are more human, depicting the life of the time with its religious associations".[30] One of the larger monasteries here is provided with a Śālā or Schoolroom which may also be utilised for religious service ; but like the Darbār cave at Kānherī, it was more probably a Dharmaśālā or refectory. Another peculiarity

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28. Gwalior State Gazetteer, i, pp. 196-197.

29. Cf. Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay (1818), vol. ii.

30. Marshall. The Bagh Caves (London, India Society, 1927 ed.), p. 73.

of these caves may be observed in the additional complement of pillars inside the usual colonnade of the Central-Hall, which were probably intended as the supports of the roof.[31] The cells for the bhikkhus were mostly square in plan, unlike those which were rectangular in Western India. Some of them contained antechambers at a lower level reached from the cells by a narrow doorway in a side wall. These chambers might have been used as "meditation chambers" which may be found in the vihāras of Nālandā. The Bāgh Cave No. 5, without the cells, was a spacious pillared hall which was obviously used as the Assembly Hall, on all sides of which ran a broad ledge cut into the rock. The Caves Nos. 3 and 4 were joined by a continuous partico, with twenty-two pillars. But the Cave No. 2 called the Paṇḍabonkigumphā is a well preserved one which was a square monastery with cells on three sides and a stūpa inside the shrine at the rear. Its antechamber had decorated walls and pillars in front. On the other hand the cave No. 4 known as the Raṅgmahal is the finest specimen of monastic architecture consisting of a central hall, about 96 feet square, with a range of cells on all its side save the front. It also had a highly ornate porch which consisted of a deep entablature with two circular columns. Attached to it was a long rectangular hall, 96 ft. in length and 44 ft. in depth, joined to the previous cave by a long verandah measuring 220 ft. in length, supported by twenty-two pillars. The rectangular has generally been described as the śālā attached to the monastery. The Cave No. 5 was a rectangular pillared hall without any monk's cell. It was obvionsly used as the central assembly hall of the establishment. Arrangements were further made for seats in the hall. Here the monks' cells were mostly square in shape quite unlike those of the cave-temples of Western India. Some of

31. Majumdar, R. C. History and culture of the Indian people, vol. iii (The Classical Age), pp. 483-484.

them had an antechamber at a lower level reached from the cell by a narrow doorway in a side way. This antechamber was probably a "meditation chamber" which may also be traced in the monasteries of Nālandā. But no usual rock-bed was found in none of these monk-cells. It is interesting to note that the caves which were excavated at Bāgh were all the vihāras without having any attached Caitya-Hall. As regards the chronology of these caves it is thought that the "Cave No. 1 with its simple four-pillared hall is probably the earliest. Caves Nos. 2 and 3, which come next with their clumsy-pillars are perhaps to be ranked with the twenty-pillared Cave No. 12 at Ajantā. Cave No. 4 may be contemporary with the cave bearing the same number at Ajantā, although the paintings on the former are allied to those of Caves Nos. 16 and 17 at Ajantā. Caves Nos. 4, 5 and 6, connected as they are, externally or internally, through a passage to Caves No. 5 and 6, would appear to be contemporary and chronologically the last of the surviving caves in this group".[32] But it is sad to note that no epigraphic evidence is found here to record all the particulars about these caves. It is indeed highly improbable to conjecture about their founder or founders and their actual date of erection. Information as regards their subsequent dilapidation also is lacking. The palaeographic references, existing sculpture and painting, may, however, fix a date of these caves near about the sixth or seventh century, when the later Guptas were still reigning even in this part of the country. Their architectural style, too, bears the characteristic of the Gupta construction.

VĪRASANA

According to the Chinese account the country called Vīrāsana (Pi-lo-shan-na) which has been identified with a great mound of ruins known as Atrañjikhera, four miles

32. **Marshall. The Bagh Caves (1927 ed.), p. 22.**

to the south of Karsāna was of a considerable size. People who were chiefly heretics here were voilent and headstrong. But there were a few who believed in the Dhamma of Buddha. There were in Vīrasana, during Hiuen-Tsang's period, two monasteries with about 300 brethren who followed the Mahāyāna doctrines. In the middle of the chief city here was a an old Saṅghārāma with a Stūpa, which although in ruins, was still about 100 ft. high. It was erected by Aśoka, the emperor.[33]

SAṄKĀŚYA

Another holy spot connected with the Buddhist monastic life is Saṅkāśya (Pali. Saṁkassa) which "has been identified with modern Sankisa, a village in the Farrukhabad district of U. P. situated thirty-six miles north by west from Kudārkoṭ, eleven miles south-east from Aliganj in the Azamnagar Pargana of the Etawah district, and forty miles north-north-east from Etawah".[34] It is here that Buddha was said to have descended to the earth from the Trayaśtriṁśa Heaven (the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods) where he went to preach the Abhidhamma to his mother and other gods. According to the Buddhist account, Buddha came down here by a tripple ladder, accompanied by the Gods Brahmā and Sakra. This incident formed later a favourite motif in Buddhist art. Thus being associated with such a holy legend Saṅkāśya became an important place of pilgrimage, and shrines, stūpas and monasteries were established there in the heyday of Buddhism. According to Fa-Hien, when Buddha came down the tripple ladder disappeared in the ground, excepting its seven steps, which continued to be visible.

33. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol.-i, p, 201.

34. Law, B. C. Historical geography of ancient India, p. 120. According to some, Saṃkassa is Sankisa-Basantapura situated on the north bank of the river Ikṣumatī, now called Kālīnadī between Atrañji and Kanoj and twenty-three miles west of Fategarh in the district of Etawah and forty-five miles north-west of Kanoj.

Later king Aśoka, however, wishing to know where their ends rested, sent men to dig and see. They went down to the earth below without seeing the bottom of the steps. So the king erected a Monastery over the steps, with an standing image. Behind this Vihāra was built also a stone pillar, about fifty cubits high, with a lion on the top of it by Aśoka. At this place there were about a thousand monks who all received their food from the common store and belonged to both the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna Schools. They all carried on their studies there. Fifty yojanas north-west from this monastery there was anothor named the 'Monastery of the Great Heap' after a wicked demon who was converted by Buddha. When it was being handed over to an Arhat by pouring water on his hands, some drops fell on the ground. Here on the spot where a Pratyeka Buddha used to take his food, was built further a monastery that accommodated probably 600 or 700 monks.[35] Hiuen-Tsang, on the other hand, saw four Saṅghārāmas at Saṅkāśya with about the thousand bhikkhus who studied the sacred texts of the Sāmmatīya (Ching-liang) School of the Hīnayāna Sect. He also observed a Saṅghārāma about twenty li to the east of the city ; within its court there were three ladders composed of the precious substances.[36] This Saṅghārāma was a beatiful construction, throughout which the artist had exhibited his greatest skill. It was inhabited by one brethren who also belonged to the Sāmmatīya School. Several myriads of religious-minded lay-people dwelt by the side of the convent. During the visit of this Chinese Pilgrim the ladders had sunk into the earth and had disappeared. It is said that the neighbouring princes, grieved at not having seen them, built up other ladders of bricks and chased stones decorated with jewels on their earlier foundations resembling the old ones. Above those they

35. Legge, J. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, pp. 47-53,

36. Beal, S. The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 81.

erected a Vihāra in which was a stone image of Buddha, and on either of which was a ladder with the figures of Brahmā and Sakra. On the outside of this Monastery, but near it, there was a stone column about 70 ft. high erected by king Aśoka. There the Chinese Pilgrim noticed another Vihāra by the side of Stūpa on the spot where Tathāgata was engaged in meditation.[37] But it is a matter of great regret that no trace of these monasteries mentioned by either Fa-Hien or Hiuen-Tsang is found at the present site of Saṅkāśya or in its neighbouring areas. Systematic explorations here may supply us with important materials for reconstructing the monastic history of this place.

ŚRĀVASTĪ

Even during the days of Buddha Śrāvastī was an active centre of Buddhism and some well-known monasteries were erected here. In later times also shrines and vihāras arose in and in the neighbourhood of Śrāvastī which remained a flourishing centre of the faith to a late period. Ancient Śrāvastī, however, had been identified with the remains at Saheth-Maheth on the borders of Gonda and Bahraich districts of Uttar Pradesh[38] and the identification is confirmed by the discovery of several inscriptions which referred to the famous convent of Jetavana at Śrāvastī[39]. Saheth-Maheth consisted of two distinct sites. The larger one, Maheth, covering an area of about 400 acres, had been identified with the ruins of the city proper and Saheth, about 32 acres in area and lying about a quarter of a mile to the south-west, was the site of the

37. Beal, S, Buddhist Records of the western world, vol. i, pp. 203-204.

38. Chaudhuri, S. B. Ethnic settlement in ancient India, pt. i, p. 62; Law, B. C. Geography of early Buddhism, p. 44; Law, B. C. Historical geography of ancient India, p. 124.

39. Luders. List of Brahmi Inscriptions, etc., Nos. 918, 919; Barua and Sinha, Barhut Inscriptions, p. 59.

Jetavana Monastery[40]. Excavations on the former site had laid bare the remains of the massive gates of the city and also the ruins of other structures, indicating the prosperous state of the city in days gone by. The remains that had been exposed, dated approximately from the Mauryan epoch down to the expiring days of Buddhism in the 12th century A.C. One of the earliest Stūpas, the original foundation of which may go back to the 3rd century B.C., if not earlier, contained some bone relics, probably pertaining to Buddha himself. A colossal statue of Buddha, dedicated by the friar Bala (1st century A.C.) —the same Bala who erected a similar statue at Sārnāth in the 3rd year of the reign of Kaniṣka was installed at the site. The ruins unearthed here testified to the flourishing condition of this sacred spot in the Gupta and mediaeval periods. Śrāvastī was originally a religious settlement, but subsequently it grew up as a city[41]. It appeared as the capital of Kośala in the Buddhist literature. Many of the important discourses were delivered here by Buddha. Śrāvastī also contributed a large number of monks and nuns to the Order[42]. According to Fa-Hien the inhabitants in this city were few and far between. He saw the site where the old MONASTERY OF MAHĀPAJĀPATI GOTAMĪ was built. He further noticed another Vihāra which was situated at a site six or seven li north-east from the Jetavana and built by VIŚĀKHĀ. Buddha was invited by her in this monastery. Outside the east gate of the Jetavana, at a distance of seventy paces to the north, on the west of the road there was erected a VIHĀRA, rather more than sixty cubits high, having in it an image of Buddha in a sitting

40. Monier-Williams, M. Buddhism, in its connexion with Brāhmanism and Hindūism and in its contrast with Christianity, (Varānasi, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series office, 1964 ed.) p. 407.

41. Papañcasūdanī, i, pp. 59-60 ; Paramatthajotikā, p. 300.

42. Psalms of the Brethren, pp. 7,13,14,19,20,25 ; Psalms of the Sisters, pp. 19-20.

posture[43] At the site of this monastery Buddha previously held a discussion with the advocates of the ninety-six schemes of erroneous doctrine, when the king and his officers, the householders, and people were all assembled in crowds to hear it. Fa-Hien knew of ninetyeight monasteries around the Jetavana Vihāra. All these vihāras, except the one which was vacant, were inhabited by the monks. During Hiuen-Tsang's period although the city was mostly in ruins, there were still some inhabitants. He saw some hundreds of Buddhist monasteries, most of which were in ruins. In these vihāras there were many monks who were adherents of Mahāyānism[44]. Among the archaeological remains which had been unearthed at modern Saheth, were a number of important Buddha and Bodhisattva images in stone, datable from the 5th to the 12th century, a number of terracottas, clay tablets and sealings, and a few silver coins[45].

But the most important monastery at Śrāvastī was the JETAVANA VIHĀRA which was donated by Anāthapiṇḍika, the wealthy merchant (Seṭṭhi) of Śrāvastī. Once while Buddha was staying at Rājagṛha, Anāthapiṇḍika had come to there on some business. At that time the people of that city were engaged in showing proper respect to Buddha. Seeing such honour of the Master, Anāthapiṇḍika naturally became curious enough to come across with him. He approached, accordingly, him and introduced himself and requested to take meal on the next day with followers as his guests. On the following day Anāthapiṇḍika was moved by Buddha's personality and begged him along with his disciples to spend the next Vassā at Śrāvastī. This request was also granted and Anāthapiṇḍika on his return journey to Śrāvastī

43. Legge, J. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, pp. 57-62.

44. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, i, p. 377 ; ii, p. 200.

45. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 50, p. 3 (Law, B.C. Śrāvastī in Indian literature).

entreated all persons to prepare ārāmas, build vihāras and be ready with all gifts for Buddha who would come very shortly.[46] Having arrived at Śrāvastī, he became anxious about the proper accommodation of Buddha and purchased Prince Jeta's pleasure-garden at a very high price. It is said that Anāthapinṇḍika had to overspread the whole area of the garden with a hundred thousand gold coins which were paid as the price. After it he converted the pleasance into a Saṅghārāma and caused to build therein a number of buildings, such as the vihāras, pariveṇas, koṭṭhakas (chambers), upaṭṭhānasālās (service halls), kitchens, store-rooms, privies, bathing-houses, bathrooms, maṇḍapas (pillared halls) etc.[47] He spent a huge amount of money to such a work of piety. All the stages in the process of construction of this monastery consummated by the ceremony of dedication, were vividly represented in Bārhut bas-relief.[48] But the Bodh-Gaya relief illustrated only the scene of fulfilment of the term of purchase of the Jeta-grove.[49] The Jetavana Monastery contained five main buildings, viz, the Gandhakuṭī where Buddha used to reside, the Karerikuṭī, Kosambakuṭī, Candanamālā and Salalaghara,[50] the last being made by king Prasenajit. The other edifices were built by Sudatta, the so called Anāthapiṇḍika. In this Vihāra Buddha lived for sometime.[51] He spent here no less than 25 Vassā-s preaching to bhikkhus, laymen and women. He also recited several Sūtras and told 416 Jātaka-stories while he was residing in this monastery. Aśoka made a religious tour of several sacred places including Jetavana which had become even in the third century B.C. famous for

46. Cullavagga, vi, 4, 8.
47. Mahāvagga, iii, 5, 6.
48. Barua, B. M. Barhut, iii, pp. 27-31.
49. Barua, B. M. Gaya and Buddhagaya, ii, pp. 104-105.
50. Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, ii, p. 407.
51. Dīpavaṃsa, p. 21 ; Mahāvaṃsa, p. 7.

its sanctity. Fa-Hien saw that the Jetavana Vihāra was still an important centre. He further noticed that the seven-storeyed building of this monastery was destroyed due to sudden fire.[52] This Chinese Pilgrim heard that the kings and the people of the countries around vied with one another in their offerings, hanging up about it silken streamers and canopies, scattering flowers, burning incense, and lighting lamps, so as to make the night as bright as day. To each of the great residences for the monks at the Jetavana Vihāra there were two gates, one facing the east and the other facing the north. The monastery was exactly in the centre of the park.[53] Hiuen-Tsang heard that at Jetavana "there were chapels for preaching and halls for meditation, mess-rooms, and chambers for monks, bath-houses, a hospital, libraries and reading-rooms, with pleasant shady tanks and a great wall encompassing all. The libraries were richly furnished not only with orthodox Buddhist literature, but also with Vedic or other non-Buddhistic works and with treatises on the arts and sciences taught in India at the time. The monastery was well-situated, being conveniently near the city, and yet far from the distracting sights and noises of the world. Moreover, the park afforded a perfect shade, and was a delightful place for walking in, during the heat and glare of the tropical day. It had streams and tanks and cool clear water; it was free from noxious stinging creatures; and was a favourite resort of the good and devotional people of all religions.[54] It is sad to note that the Monastery with its libraries and other buildings of the Jeta Grove before the beginning of the seventh century A.C., as seen by Hiuen-Tsang, was in desolate ruin. The residences were wholly destroyed; the foundations only

52. Law, B. C. Early Indian monasteries, p. 8.

53. Legge, J. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, pp. 57-59.

54. Watters. On Yuan Chwang's Travels, i, p. 386.

remained, with the exception of one solitary brick building, which stood alone in the midst of the ruins and contained an image of Buddha.[55] But the site did not seem to have been neglected. Another Vihāra was probably erected here at an unknown date after Hiuen-Tsang and as late as in A.C. 1130 it received a grant sanctioned at Vārāṇasī (Banaras), under the seal of king Govindachandra of Kanauj who had made his capital in that city, recording the gift of six villages to the "Saṅgha, of whom Buddha-Bhaṭṭāraka is the chief and foremost, residing in the Mahāvihāra of Holy Jetavana".[56] This grant was discovered at Saheth-Maheth and some of the six villages mentioned in the record are still called by their same names. Another inscription dated A.C. 1219 and found in that locality recorded the erection of a monastery by one Vidyādhara, counsellor of Madana, "King of Gadhipura", perhaps a feudatory of Gobindachandra.[57] But it is to be noted that after the 12th century, we get no definite accout of the Jetavana Monastery. It might probably be that the Buddhist monks had left this Vihāra due to adverse political circumstances. Gen. Cunningham during his excavations in the years 1863 and 1876 at the present site of Śrāvastī unearthed the ruins of no less than sixteen stūpas and other ancient buildings like Kosambakuṭī, the Gandhakuṭī, etc.[58]

The other important vihāras at Śrāvastī were Pubbārāma (Pūrvārama), Andhavana, and Rājakārāma. The PUBBĀRĀMA Monastery was to the north-east of Jetavana, and erected by Viśākhā, the daugher-in-law

55. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, ii, p. 4.

56. Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1907-1908, p. 120.

57. cf. Journal of the Asitic Society of Bengal, 1925, vol. xxi (New Series).

58. Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, vol. i, pp. 330 ff; vol. xi, pp. 78 ff.

of the banker Migāra.[59] The construction of the Pubbārāma was made under the supervision of Moggallāna; while Sārīputta is said to have supervised the erection of the Jetavana.[60] The circumstances which led to the erection of this monastery were stated in the commentary of the Dhammapada.[61] Once Viśākhā returned home from the Jetavana Monastery, forgetting all about her valuable necklace which she took off her person and left behind in the Monastery. While she got it back, she disagreed to wear it and sold it away for a huge amount of money. She spent the money in purchasing a site, whereupon she built a grand Vihāra and dedicated it to the Saṅgha. Materials like wood and stone were used for building the Monastery which stood up as a magnificent two-storied edifice with innumerable rooms[62] and verandahs supported on pillars which were shaped like the nails of elephants.[63] Due to the amenities of monk-life available here, Pubbārāma was a favourite resort of Buddha and his disciples. This Monastery was also known as Pubbārāma-Migāramātupāsāda[64] where Buddha once recited the Aggañña Suttanta[65]. The other Monastery called RĀJAKĀRĀMA[66] was erected under the orders of king Prasenajit for the accommodation of the bhikkhunīs headed by Sumanā, the king's sister[67]. ANDHAVANA, another monastery, was situated at a distance to the north-west

59. Bandopadhyay, Anukul Chandra. Buddha O Buddhadharma. (Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1966 ed.). p. 143.

60. Malalasekera, G. P. Dictionary of Pali proper names, vol. ii, p. 628.

61. Dhammapada Commentary, vol. i, pp. 384-420.

62. ibid, vol. i, p. 414.

63. Dutt, N. and Bajpai, K. D. Development of Buddhism in Uttar Pradesh, p. 246.

64. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 50.

65. Dīghanikāya, ii, p. 80.

66. Saṃyuttanikāya, v, pp. 60 ff; Majjhimanikāya, iii, p. 271.

67. Dutta, N. and Bajpai, K. D. Development of Buddhism in Uttar Pradesh, p. 371.

of the Jetavana Vihāra. It became a resort of nuns of Āḷavī and was next to the Pubbārāma in the provision of facilities to monks and nuns for meditation and spiritual exercises.

KUŚĪNAGARA

Kuśīnagara or Kusinārā, a city of the Mallas[68], where under a grove of the śāla trees Buddha passed to the Mahāparinirvāṇa in his eightieth year, became a Buddhist place of pilgrimage and in the course of time was covered with sacred shrines and monasteries. It has been identified by Cunningham with Kasia in Gorakhpur (now in Deoria) district[69]. Subsequent discoveries at the site, especially the huge Parinirvāṇa image, as seen by Hiuen-Tsang, and a large number of terracotta seals with the legend : "Sri Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāvihāriyārya Bhikṣu-saṅghasya,"[70] and a copper-plate bearing the inscription : "Parinirvāṇa caitya tāmrapaṭṭa-iti"[71] have set the controversy about the actual location of Kuśīnagara (Chinese Kiu-shi-na-K'ie-lo) at rest. For unknown reasons, however, this place was deserted early in its history and Fa-Hien, in the 5th century A.C., noticed "the utter ruin and desolation of the city and the district," but vihāras were still extant at Kuśīnagara.[72] Hiuen-Tsang, too, found the place in more or less the same condition.[73] He saw here a great brick Vihāra, in which was a figure of Tathāgata in his Nirvāna-posture. By the side of this Monastery was a Stūpa which was in ruinous state and of about 200 feet in height. This Stūpa, as seen by the

68. Dīghanikāya, ii, p. 165.

69. Majumdar, S. N. Cunningham's Ancient geography of India, p. 493 ; Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, i. p. 76 ff.

70. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1905-6, p. 84.

71. Ibid, 1911-12, p. 77.

72. Giles. The Travels of Fa-Hien, Ch. xxiv.

73. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, pp. 25-45.

Chinese Pilgrim, was built by king Aśoka[74]. Mr. Carlleyle attempted to identify the monuments observed by Hiuen-Tsang, but it was not possible to locate every one of them with certainty. I-tsing, on the other hand, found Kuśīnagara towards the close of the seventh century in a somewhat flourishing condition. He saw the Caitya at the "holy place where the Śāla trees turned white like the wings of crane" and the MAKUṬABANDHANA (Pan-da-na) Monastery which attracted a large number of pilgrims. The usual strength of the Monastery was a hundred, but in spring and autumn it was "sometimes unexpectedly visited by a multitude of travellers." He knew an occasion when about five hundred priests suddenly arrived there, the resident bhikkhus even then had little difficulty in supplying them with food.[75] It is said that Ta-Cheng-Teng, a disciple of Hiuen-Tsang who visited Kuśīnagara with I-Tsing, expired there while residing at the MAHĀPARINIRVĀṆA VIHĀRA. The later history of this place is not exactly known. Carlleyle in 1875-6 had discovered a very fragmentary inscription which bore partly the genealogy of the Kālācurī rulers of the 11th-12th centuries. But it was not known, because of its ruined condition, when and why the inscription was engraved. Most probably it recorded the construction of the monastery in the ruins of which it was found.[76] It is really painful to note that the monasteries at Kuśīnagara could not avoid the iconoclastic zeal of the early Muslim invaders. Carlleyle during his excavations saw the evidences of their ruthless destruction "by fire and sword."[77] Some of these monuments, as is evident in the

74. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, ii, p. 32.

75. Takakusu. A Record of the Buddhist Religion, pp. 29-30, 38-39, 145.

76. Epigraphia Indica, XVIII, pp. 121-37; Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1910-11, p. 64.

77. Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, xviii, pp. 62-63; xxii. p. 21.

numerous charred remains found among the debris, might have suffered the catastrophe even in the fifth century A.C. perhaps in the hands of the Hūṇas.[78]

GOPĀLPUR

An ancient Buddhist Monastery may also be traced in the ruins at GOPĀLPUR in the Gorakhpur District in Uttar Pradesh, where are found some Buddhist Sūtras in Sanskrit written on bricks.[79] The tract of country south of Gorakhpur lying between the Amī, Kuāna, and Ghāgrā rivers was sigularly rich in ancient sites, which had received very slight examination. One of the most ancient of these sites was marked by the village of Gopālpur, which was situated about two miles west of the bazar known as Gola, a short distance from the northern bank of the Ghāgrā, and about twenty-eight miles almost due south of Gorakhpur. Here the ruins yielded great earthen vessels, pestles, and other utensils of terracotta, and numerous specimens of spindle whorls (ṭikrī). Small stone stools (caukī) indicated that the buildings included a Buddhist monastery. These stools, which were commonly from twelve to fifteen inches long and six inches high, with four small feet, might be detected at many Buddhist sites, and were probably used by the monks to stand on bathing. Dr. Hoey found there inscribed bricks which had been taken out of a small chamber about a feet square and about eight feet below the surface, which was built of huge bricks, about a foot and a half long, and some three inches thick. The inscribed bricks were rested on a sort of pedastal, or vedī, made of brick, which was destroyed for the sake of the material. On a ledge in the chamber

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78. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1907-1908, p. 51 ff.

79. Dutta, N. and Bajpai, K. D. Development of Buddhism in U. P. p. 275.

Dr. Hoey himself noticed a small earthen-ware saucer containing eleven copper coins which belonged to the reigns of the great Kuṣāna kings, Vima Kadphises, Kaniṣka, and Huviṣka, and therefore ranged in date from circa A.C. 40 to A.C. 150, as per the chronology generally accepted. The discovery of these brick records seems to be of much interest and importance. It is startling to find that the Indian Buddhists used bricks, as the Assyrians did, to preserve long documents. The characters of the inscriptions, which used throughout the tridendate form of unattached Y, belonged to the Northern alphabet of the third or fourth century. The coins associated with the bricks indicated that the earliest possible date should be assigned to the inscriptions. These brick-books dealt with Buddhist ontology, and specially with the doctrine of the twelve Nidānas, or 'Causes' which connect Avidyā, or Blind Ignorance, with Jarā-maraṇa, Decay and Death, and thus form the Bhava-Cakra, or Cycle of Existence. All such archaeological discoveries showed obviously that during the Kuṣāṇa period probably there was a magnificent Vihāra at the present site of Gopālpur. But today we have no evidence, except the ruins here, to make a detailed study of the Gopālpur Monastery.

KAUŚĀMBĪ

Kauśāmbī (Pāli. Kosambi ; Chinese. Kiau-Shang-Mi), the capital of Vaṁsas or Vatsas,[80] was another seat of Buddhist monastic learning. It has been identified with modern Kosam on the Jumma, about thirty miles south-west from Allahabad.[81] Many monasteries were erected here. Mention, thus, may be made of BADARIKĀRĀMA which was situated in the vicinity of Kauśāmbi, at some

80. Dhammapada commentary (P. T. S.) i, pp. 202-208 ; Jātaka, ed. Fousboll, no, 16.

81. Law, B. C. Historicai Geography of ancient India', p. 100.

distance from Ghositārāma and which was referred to in the Kosam Inscription of the reign of Mahārajā Vaiśravana.[82] It was a Buddhist retreat where Buddha once dwelt and Rāhula set his heart on the observance of the rules of monkhood.[83] An elder named Khemaka while staying at this monastery fell very ill. So the bhikkhus of Ghositārāma deputed Dasaka, a Bhuddhist monk, to enquire about his pains.[84] Among the vihāras at Kauśāmbī however, the GHOSITĀRĀMA, founded by one Seṭṭhi (Merchant) named Ghosita, was a remarkable one. It was said that having heard the preaching of Buddha once in Sāvatthi, Ghosita and his friends, Kukkuṭa and Pāvāriya, became his followers and invited him and his retinue to Kauśāmbī where they began to build ārāmas for the accommodation of Buddha and his followers. All of them founded the ārāmas, of which the one built by Ghosita[85] was really the largest. Buddha, henceforth, on his visits to Kauśāmbī generally used to dwell at the Ghositārāma[86]. He was said to prescribe the Brahmadaṇḍa for Channa, an inmate of this monastery on the eve of his demise[87]. Here two wanderers named Maṇḍissa and Jāliya interviewed Buddha[88]. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja who was instrumental in the conversion of Udayana to Buddhism, used to dwell here. Some thirty thousands monks of this monastery headed by Urudhammarakkhita Thero visited Ceylon in about the first century during the reign of king Duṭṭhagāmaṇī[89]. Fa-Hien also heard that formerly in this Vihāra Buddha used to reside. During the 5th century A.C. when this Chinese Pilgrim visited the Vihāra, he saw there a

82. Epigraphia Indica, xxiv, pt. iv, p. 147.

83. Jātaka, i ; p. 160 ; iii, p. 64.

84. Saṃyuttanikāya, iii, p. 126 ff.

85. Dīghanikāya, i, pp. 157, 159 ; Saṃyuttanikāya, ii, p. 115 ; Papañcasūdanī, ii, p. 390.

86. Sāmantapāsādikā, ii, p. 574 ; Vinayapiṭaka, ii, p. 184.

87. Vinaya Texts, ii, p. 370.

88. Dīghanikāya, i, pp. 157, 159-160.

89. Mahāvaṃsa (P. T. S.) p. 228.

company of the Hīnayāna monks[90]. The recent excavation at this site had resulted in the discovery of some inscriptions which helped in locating this famous monastery. The site of this Vihāra that was a favourite resort of Venerable Ānanda, was not far off from the Yamunā.[91] Hiuen-Tsang, the Chinese Pilgrim, who visited Kauśāmbī in the seventh century A.C. saw there more than ten monasteries, all in utter ruin[92]. Within the city was a ruined palace (i.e. palace-precinct), in which was a large Vihāra about sixty feet high. In this monastery was a sandal-wood figure of Buddha, surmounted by a stone canopy, built by Udayana, the king of Kauśāmbī[93]. Hiuen-Tsang also found the ruins of an old habitation, the house of Ghoshira (Kun-shi-to)[94] the nobleman. In the middle there, were a Vihāra of Buddha and a Stūpa containing hair and nail relics. Not far to the south-east of the city was another monastery which was erected on the garden of Ghoshira the nobleman. Attached to it was a Stūpa, about 200 feet high, built by king Aśoka.[95] Here Tathāgata preached, his doctrines for several years. By the side of the city the Chinese Pilgrim saw only the foundation wall of an old Saṅghārāma where Dharmapāla, the expert in the Buddhist lore, refuted the arguments of the heretics.[96] We also find in the Chinese source that both Vasubandhu[97] and Asaṅga[98] had their dwellings at Kauśāmbī for some time. But in a later period when this part of India was

90. Legge. Travels of Fa-Hien, p. 96.

91. Saṃyuttanikayā, ii, 133 ff.

92. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, etc., i, p. 366.

93. Beal, S. The life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 91.

94. Ghoshira may be Ghosita of the Pāli tradition and the garden with a Vihāra referred to here was, perhaps, the famous Ghositārāma.

95. Law, B. C. Early Indian monasteries, p. 7.

96. Beal, S. Buddist Records of the Western World, vol. i, p. 237.

97. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 60, p. 20 (Kausambi in ancient literature).

98. Ghosh, N. N. An early history of Kausambi, pp. 75-76.

attacked by the Hūṇas during circa 510 to 515 A.C., the monastic establishments here together with their commendable collections of religious texts faced hard days. The evidences of the Hūṇa conquest were furnished by two seals, discovered in the ruins of the Ghositārāma Monastery,[99] which are counterstruck by the letters "To Ra Ma Na" and with the legend by "Hūṇa-Rājā" indicating the same monarch. It is regrettable to note that Kauśāmbī could never fully recover from the Hūṇa devastations[100].

SĀRNĀTH

Situated at a distance of about seven miles from Vārāṇasi city, Sārnāth presented a large collection of Buddhist ruins. It was known as Isipatanamigadāya (Ṛṣipatana-mṛgadāva) which was mentioned by Buddha as one of the four places of pilgrimage.[101] This place was called Isipatana, because sages on their way through the air from the Himālayas, used to alight here or start from here on their aerial flight. Its other part of the same, i.e. Migadāya, was based on the story of the Nigrodhamiga Jātaka. According to this story, Buddha and his followers, in one of their previous lives, were born here as antelopes. The king of Vārāṇasi being pleased with Bodhisattva, the leader of the antelopes, granted him protection, declaring this whole area reserved for the antelopes. In the inscriptions Sārnāth was referred to as the Dharmacakra (or, Saddharmacakra)-Pravartana-Vihāra (Monastery of the Turning of the Wheel of Righteousness) which might be probably the name of a Vihāra in old days. But in course of time this name became the indicative of the whole site of Sārnāth. In addition to the preaching of the First Sermon by Buddha and forming of the first saṅgha several

99. Indian Antiquary, 1954-55, p. 18.

100. Sharma, G. R. The Excavations at Kausāmbī (1957-1959), p. 16.

101. Dīghanikāya, ii, p. 141.

other incidents took place at Sārnāth.[102] Thus from the life-time of Buddha, Sārnāth gained importance as a Buddhist religious centre. Accordingly many vihāras, stūpas and shrines were erected here by numerous kings and merchants alike. A Buddhist tradition related that two vihāras were constructed here during the life-time of Buddha. One of these was built by NANDIYA, the rich merchant of Vārāṇasi. The first Chinese Pilgrim, Fa-Hien, who visited Sārnāth early in the 5th century A.C., found four stūpas and two monasteries here.[103] Hiuen-Tsang, on the other hand, saw at Sārnāth thirty saṅghārāmas which were inhabited by 1,500 monks who were the followers of the Sāmmatiya School. The buildings of Migadāya at that period were divided into eight parts encircled by a wall. The Chinese Pilgrim was much impressed seeing the artistic caityas, stūpas and temples there. He noted that the Aśokan pillar was seventy feet high and the dilapidated stūpa was one hundred feet in height.[104] The last Vihāra erected here, encircling the ruins of an earlier establishment, belonged to the reigning period of Govindacandra (A.C. 1114-1154) of Kanauj. It was built by his devout Buddhist queen Kumaradevī. In this Vihāra, a praśasti on a stone-slab has been discovered. The praśasti recorded that the site had been kept by the queen "as it was in the time of Aśoka". She had only restored it and made it "more wonderful".[105] Kumarodevī wished to revive ancient Sārnāth that was then the Gāhadvāla capital and added the very last monastery to that sacred Buddhist site. Her monastery was, in fact, the biggest single construction in that monastic

102. Vinayapiṭaka, i, p. 15 ff; Aṅguttaranikāya, i, pp. 119-120; Law, B. C. Ancient Indian Tribes (1926 ed.), pp. 22-25.

103. Legge, J. A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms, pp. 93-96.

104. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, p. 48, ff.

105. Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1907-1908 (Dharmāśokanarādhipasya samaye Śrī-dharmacakrajina-mahāvihāre yādṛk tannyāya rakṣitaḥ punarāyanacakra tato' pyadbhutam).

complex. It being an immense rectangular structure was erected partly over the ruins of and partly encompassed by, several pre-existing Gupta monasteries and temples. As already observed, the praśasti on a stone-slab discovered in this monastery contained a lengthy poem in Sanskrit in eulogy of the queen Kumaradevī, was composed by a poet called Kunda "versed in six languages" of Bengal and inscribed on stone by Vāmana, an artist. This epigraphic record presented a personal glimpse of the queen, though the account was couched in conventional hyperbolic praises : "Her mind was set on religion alone ; her desire was bent on virtue ; she had undertaken to lay in a store of merit ; she found a noble satisfaction in bestowing gifts." About her personal attractive graces was said : "Her gait was that of an elephant ; her appearance charming to the eye ; she bowed down to the Buddha and people sang her praise". The monastery, erected by her, was described as an "ornament to the earth". It was consisted of nine segments[106] and expected to last "as long the moon and the sun". The ruins of Kumaradavī's grand monastery that bore the name of Dharmacakrajinavihāra measured 760 feet from east to west on the longer side of the rectangle. But unfortunately Sārnāth in the year 1194 A.C, was subjected to utter destruction in the hands of Muhammad Ghori. Several structures here were leveled to the ground and the resident-monks were either killed or compelled to run away. Thus gradually Sārnāth became almost deserted. The ruins at the site still remind us of its glorious past. In 1835-36 Sir A. Cunningham explored a monastery and a temple to the north of the Dharmarājikā Stūpa. At a later period, however, remains of several other monasteries were discovered. Among them the ruins of one, generally marked as the Monastery No. 5 and excavated by Major Kittoe were really interesting. This Monastery contained an open courtyard, 50 ft. square, a series of cells on the four

106. **navakhaṇḍa-maṇḍala-mahāvihāra.**

sides and a wall in the centre of the court. On one side were three cells evidently forming a sanctuary, as is frequently found in the later rock-cut examples.[107] It was planned as a Catuḥśālā Saṅghārāma. In front of the cells inside the courtyard was a verandah supported on pillars. The central room on the inner side was the entrance-chamber (pratyupasthāna-sālā). In front of it was the portico consisting of one central approach and two guard-rooms. This structure was probably built during the Gupta period. Near it was the Monastery No. 7 which was erected during the mediaeval period on the ruins of an older structure. It was of the usual pattern, consisting of an open courtyard, surrounded by a running verandah and ranges of cells on all sides. But the most important monastery at the site was DHARMACAKRA-JINA-VIHĀRA (Monastery No. 1) which was the gift, as we have already noticed, of Kumaradevī, the queen of Govindacandra, King of Kanauj. This monastery is now in ruins. The area of the Vihāra was probably occupied by a central block of buildings. It had an open paved court on the west with rows of cells on the other three sides. The basement of the monastery was built of neatly chiselled bricks, decorated with numerous elegant mouldings on both the outer and inner faces. But at present all the halls and apartments of the bhikkhus have completely been destroyed. This Vihāra had two gateways towards the east, there being a distance of 290 ft. between the two. The vast neighbouring area of the Dharmacakra-Jina- Vihāra was occupied in earlier days by several monasteries. Of these now called Monastery No. 2 was situated on the western limits ; the second one, Monastery No. 3, lay in front of the eastern gateway of Kumaradevī's Monastery beneath its courtyard ; and a third one, Monastery No. 4 stood midway between the two entrances beneath the second courtyard. From the

107. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. xxiii, pp. 469 et seqq.

size of its bricks, the Monastery No. 2 appeared to date back to the early Gupta period. The ground-plan of the Vihāra showed a courtyard by low walls, which might have carried the pillars of the verandah in front of the cells and a row of cells on the sides, from which traces of nine cells on the west had survived. On plan, however, the Monastery No. 3 was similar to that of the Monastery No. 2. Three cells in the southern side were exposed with a part of the verandah in front. Beneath its paved courtyard was an underground drain. The architectural and sculptural features of this monastery assigned a date of the late Kuṣāṇa period to it. The Monastery No. 4 also had a courtyard, some cells and a verandah. Like the Monastery No. 3, the verandah-pillars in it were found intercolumned into a wall. To the west of the Dhāmekh Stupa at Sārnāth was another monastery (Monastery No. 6) which was previously supposed to be a hospital as a number of pestles and mortars were found in it. This monastery belonged to the 8th or 9th century A.C. and was probably erected on the ruins of an earlier structure of the Gupta period.

VAIŚĀLĪ

Vaiśālī, the capital of the powerful Licchavi clan, was in the early days a stronghold of Buddhism. It had been identified by Cunningham with the present village of Basarh in the Muzaffarpur district in Tirhut.[108] Buddha visited it three times during his life-time and announced here his approaching Nirvāṇa. Thus on account of its association with the Master, Vaiśālī had become in ancient period one of the centres of Buddhism. Hence as a consequence many monasteries were established there. Vaiśālī was visited by the Chinese Pilgrim-Fa-Hien in the 5th century A.C. According to him there was a large forest to the north of Vaiśālī. In that forest were a double-

108, Report of the Archaelogical Survey of India, i, pp, 55-56 ; xvi, pp. 6, 34, 89-91.

galleried Vihāra where Buddha dwelt and a tope over half the body of Ānanda. He learnt that inside the city was a Vihāra built by Ambapālī (Āmrapālī), a city-courtesan, in honour of Buddha. That monastery was still visible during his sojourn.[109] Hiuen-Tsang, another Chinese Pilgrim, saw at Vaiśālī (Fei-she-li) several hundred saṅghārāmas which were mostly dilapidated. There were still three or five monasteries which remained with few brethren in them. Five or six li north-west of the royal city here was a Saṅghārāma with some Buddhist monks who belonged to the Sāmmitiya School of the Hīnayāna. He also heard of the Monastery donated by Ambapālī and came across with, in the neighbourhood of Vaiśālī, a Saṅghārāma called ŚVETAPURA (Shi-fei-to-pu-lo) and its massive towers, with their rounded shapes and double storeys.[110] He obtained a copy of the Mahāyāna treatise, 'Bodhisattvapiṭaka'[111] at the Śvetapura Monastery which might have a specialised collection of the texts relating to Northern Buddhism. Apart from the above literary description we have epigraphic evidences to show that ancient Vaisālī became a chief centre of monastic learning.[112] The most interesting discovery made during the excavations in Vaiśali consisted of a large number of pieces of clay, bearing impressions of seals. The total amounted to about 720 pieces with somewhat over 1,100 seal-impressions on them. These clay seals were discovered in a chamber belonging to approximately not later than the time of the imperial Gupta kings in the Fort of Rājā Biśāl. The subterranean chamber which preserved these seals probably

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109. Legge, J. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, p. 72.

110. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, pp. 66-76.

111. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, p. 80 ; Beal, S. The life of Hiuen Tsiang, p. 101.

112. Monier-Williams, M. Buddhism, in its connexion with Brāhmanism and Hinduism, and in its contrast with Christianity (1 64 ed.), pp. 409-411.

served as a deposit for some written documents. From the shape of these clay pieces it was evident that they were attached to the literary documents, and that they served to hold together the string which was tied around the wooden boards, upon which the document was written, or which were used as a sort of envelope. The method adopted for sealing documents at this time seemed to have been to press down the ends of the string tied round the boards into a piece of moist clay by means of some instrument, perhaps the broad side of a knife. Evidence of this was the groove which invariably occurred on the back of all the seals. Generally a few thin lines ran across its centre. They might have been made by the blunt edge of the knife to press down the strings more deeply, in order to make them adhere tighter to the clay. The other side of the clay bore the impression of the sender's seal. The palaeographic evidence ascribed its date distinctly to the fourth and fifth centuries, or the period of the Imperial Guptas.[113]

NAULĀGARH

The report of the excavations[114] at Naulagarh which is located in Eastern Monghyr, to the north about 16 miles from Begusarai, also showed that there was a big Buddhist establishment in this part of Bihar. An inscription (No. 2) dated 11th to 12th century A.C. and discovered here, recorded the erection of a Buddhist monastery for the first time in North Bihar or Tirabhukti. Dr. Upendra Thakur stated that "various mounds at Naulagarh, besides the fortification area, definitely point to the existence of vihāras and other establishments."[115]

113. Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, vol. LI, pp. 21-22 (Kuraishi, M. M. H. List of ancient monuments protected under the Act VII of 1904 in the Province of Bihar and Orissa).

114. A detailed report is found in G. D. College Bulletin Series, Nos. 1-2.

115. Thakur, Upendra, Studies in Jainism and Buddhism in Mithila (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1964 ed,), p. 133.

BODH-GAYĀ

Bodh-Gayā (Buddha-Gayā) which is situated now six miles to the south of Gayā in Bihar,[116] was so called because here Buddha attained the Perfect Enlightenment under the famous Bo-tree. The Bodh-Gayā Inscription of Mahānāman (the year 169) mentioned the famous Buddhist site at Bodh-Gayā.[117] Sacred shrines and stately monuments were often raised here to commemorate the highest spiritual attainment of Buddha. Fa-Hien found three monasteries in the neighbourhood of the Bo-tree, in all of which bhikkhus dwelt.[118] The local lay-people supplied the communities of these monks with an abundant sufficiency of what they required, so that there was no lack or stint.[119] The monks scrupulously observed the rules of the Vinaya with respect to decorum, which related to sitting down, rising up, or entering the assembly ; and the rules which the holy congregation followed during Buddha's life-time.[120] At Bodh-Gaya the most attractive object was the Great Temple. Next in importance to it was the MAHĀ-BODHI SAṆGHĀRĀMA or the Monastery of the Bodhi Tree. The first mention of it was made by Fa-Hien.[121] Hiuen-Tsang then mentioned it as just one large monastery which was situated at a place outside the northern gate of the Bodhi-tree. This Vihāra consisted of six halls with towers of observation (temple-towers) of three storeys. It was encircled by a wall of defence thirty or forty feet high. The utmost skill of the artist had been employed for decorating it with the richest colours (red and blue). The Monastery possessed lofty stūpas containing relics of Buddha and had also a statue of the Exalted One, cast in

116. Papañcasūdanī, ii, p. 188 ; Law, B. C. Historical geography of ancient India, p. 213.

117. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. iii, no. 71, pp. 274 ff.

118. Bhattacharyya, Tarapada. The Bodhgayā Temple. (Calcutta, K. L. Mukhopadhyaya, 1966), p. 16.

119. Legge, J. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, p. 89.

120. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western world, vol. i, p. lxii.

121. Giles, H. A. The Travels of Fa-hein, p. 77.

gold and silver, and decorated with gems and precious stones. About one thousand bhikkhus who belonged to the Sthavira School of the Great Vehicle lived there. They carefully observed the Dharma and Vinaya and their conduct was pure and correct.[122] This monastery entertained many Buddhist monks of Ceylon, and, as a matter of fact, it was exclusively tenanted during the period of Hiuen-Tsang's sojourn in India by the bhikkhus representing the Buddhist Order of Ceylon. Such hospitality was shown to the Ceylonese monks, because the former king of Ceylon built this monastery with the express purpose of providing the Buddhist monks of his country with a suitable retreat in India. Hiuen-Tsang recorded that in the past there was a king of Ceylon, who was truthful and a believer in the Law of Buddha. Once his brother who had become a disciple of Buddha went out to wander through India thinking on the holy traces of Buddha. But strangely enough he was treated with disdain as a foreigner in all monasteries visited by him. He returned, therefore, to Ceylon and induced the king to build convents throughout all India. Having readily received financial assistance from the king, he returned to India and was informed that the Bodhi was the place where all the past Buddhas had attained the holy fruit and hence there was no better place than this for carrying out the project. So he erected a monastery at Mahābodhi and set up the following inscription, engraved on copper: "To help all without distinction is the highest teaching of all the Buddhas; to exercise mercy as occasion offers is the illustrious doctrine of former saints. And now I, unworthy descendant in the royal line, have undertaken to found this Saṅghārāma, to enclose the sacred traces, and to hand down their renown to future ages, and to spread their benefits among the people. The priests of my country will thus obtain independence, and be treated as members of the Fraternity

122. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, p. 133; Watters. On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, ii, p. 136.

of this country. Let this privilege be handed down from generation to generation without interruption." At the instance of Hiuen-Tsang again, the king of Ceylon sent valuable presents by way of a tribute to the then reigning king of India (Mahā-Śrīvijaya) and requested the latter through his messengers, headed by his brother, to be pleased to permit him to erect monasteries throughout India for the convenience of the Ceylonese pilgrims. Accordingly, His Majesty the Great king of India gladly allowed the king of Ceylon to establish such a Vihāra in one of the places of Buddhistic importance. Thereupon the king of Ceylon conferred with the śramaṇas of his kingdom and selected Bodh-Gayā as a suitable place for the erection of the monastery. Hiuen-Tsang did not record the names of the king of Ceylon and his brother who acted as the principal emissary and of the contemporary great king of India. But in the Mahāvaṁsa, the Ceylonese Chronicle, we find that Meghavaṇṇa (A.C. 362-409), the king of Ceylon, had sent an embassy to Samudragupta in India to seek his permission to erect a Vihāra for the Ceylonese pilgrims.[123] The location of this vihāra to the north of the Bodh-Gayā temple may now be taken to correspond exactly with the extensive mound called the Amar Sinh's Fort. The lofty walls, thirty to forty feet high, of the monastery would subsequently have led to its occupation as a fort after the decline of Buddhism during the 11th century. Two other monasteries were probably built at Bodh-Gayā by lady and matron KURAṆGĪ to perpetuate the holy memory of her deceased husband, king Kauśikīputra. References to them were often found in some of the votive labels on the old Bodh-Gayā stone-railing.[124] One of these vihāras seems to have been used as a retreat for the bhikkhus and other, as a residence of the queen herself in her retirement. These two earlier

123. Geiger, transl. Mahāvaṃsa, p. xxxix.

124. The labels record: Kosikipotrāsa Imdāgimitrasa rajāpāsādā, the Royal Pālaces of Kauśikīputra Indrāgnimitra.

monasteries along with the Mahābodhi Saṅghārāma founded by the king of Ceylon might have made up the total of three vihāras observed by Fa-Hien. Perhaps, the ruins of the two groups of buildings outside the north-east and north-west corners of the enclosure of the Ceylonese monastery appeared to be surviving remnants of the two earlier monasteries erected by Kuraṅgī, the queen. It may be assumed that the Mahābodhi Saṅghārāma with its towers and enclosures was a separate establishment, complete in itself. The remains of this grand Vihāra with outer walls 9 feet thick and massive round towers at the four corners were discovered by Sir Cunningham and Mr. Beglar in the mound which was from 1,500 to 2,000 feet long from the west to the east, and nearly 1,000 feet broad from the north to the south.[125] Dr. B. M. Barua wrote : "The plan of the monastery was laid out in a diagram of squares, six on each side, of which the four corner towers and the four middle squares to an open-pillared court containing a well. A long covered drain led from the well to the outside of the walls on the north-west, ending in a gargoyle spout in the shape of a large crocodile's head, of dark blue besalt, richly carved. The open courtyard in the middle was surrounded by a cloister supported on pillars, and on all four sides of the cloister there were small groups of cells. The floor of the monastery was level with the top of the plinth, and that of the courtyard outside was five feet nine inches lower, or just two feet above the foot of the plinth".[126] It is to be noted that on the north and south sides the central cells mentioned above led to the small rooms, which were outside the main line of wall. According to Sir Cunningham, "these inner rooms probably contained statues of Buddha, but the other rooms were, no doubt, the cells or dwelling-rooms of the superior monks. Only one statue, of gold

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125. Cunningham, A. Mahābodhi or the great Buddhist temple under the Bodhi tree at Buddha-Gaya ; ed. by A. K. Narain (Varanasi. Indological Book house), p. 43.

126. Barua, Benimadhab. Gayā and Buddha-Gayā, vol. ii, pp. 32-37.

and silver, is mentioned by Hwen Thsang ; and this probably occupied the outer cell on the north side, with the middle cell as a hall in front of it. The outer cell on the south side may have been the Treasury and Relic Chamber of the monastery. The remaining chambers on the ground floor could not have accommodated more than 16 monks. A second storey might have held 20 more, and if there had been a third storey the whole number of cells would not have held more than 56 monks. I conclude, therefore, that the lower orders of priests must have been lodged in chambers arranged inside the walls of the surrounding enclosure, which was about 400 feet square. As the wall of this enclosure is said by Hwen Thsang to have been from 30 to 40 feet in height, there may have been three storeys of chambers ; and, as each side of the enclosure was about 400 feet in length, the whole length of the rows of chambers would have been from 1,500 to 1,600 feet in each storey, equal to about 600 apartments. But, as the number of monks is said by Hwen Thsang to have been about 1,000, I conclude that there must have been other smaller monasteries on the great mound".[127] The Vajrāsan Mahābodhi Monastery was mentioned again, in about A.C. 670, by the pilgrim Hwui Lun, as "the same as the built by a King of Ceylon, in which priests of that country formerly dwelt." I-tsing, another Chinese Pilgrim, also visited (A.C. 671-695) the great monastery of Bodh-Gayā. He recorded : "Afterwards we came to the Mahābodhi Vihāra, and worshipped the image of the real face (of the Buddha)".[128]

PĀṬALIPUTRA

Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna) which was the later capital of Magadha, became also an important centre

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127. Cunningham, A. Mahābodhi or the great Buddhist temple under the Bodhi tree at Buddha-Gaya, p. 44.

128. I-tsiag. A Recard of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago ; trans. by J. Takakusu (1966 ed.), p. xxxii.

of Buddhism. Many Buddhist monasteries were established there even in the very early years. Archaeological excavations have found out the remains of some Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna vihāras erected at the time of Fa-Hien. Buddha was invited by the lay-worshippers at this place which was then merely a village known as Pāṭaligāma, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of a living house (āvāsathāgāra).[129] A Monastery was built at Pāṭaliputra by an influential Brāhmaṇa householder of Vārāṇasi for a Buddhist monk named Udena.[130] At Pātaliputra was another monastery[131] called KUKKUṬĀRĀMA where once Muṇḍa, a king of Magadha, being overwhelmed with grief at the death of his wife came to see the sage, Nārada, who consoled him by religious instruction. This monastery was founded by a banker named Kukkuṭa. Hiuen-Tsang noticed it to the south-east of the old city of Pāṭaliputra. He heard that king Aśoka built it when he was converted to Buddhism. It was already in ruins.[133] A monk called Bhadda dwelt at this monastery and he had conversations with Buddha's famous disciple Ānanda.[133] It was here Aśoka convoked 1,000 monks and gave them four kinds of religious offerings.[134] Hiuen-Tsang pointed out that this monastery was evidently the old monastery containing the Tope of the Gong-striking and the Āmalaka Tope.[135] This monastery was different from that which existed at Kauśāmbī bearing the same name.[136]

There was another monastery at Pāṭaliputra known as the AŚOKĀRĀMA built by king Aśoka[137]. The building

129. Vinayapiṭaka, pp. 226-8.
130. Majjhimanikāya, ii, p. 157 ff.
131. Saṃyuttanikāya, v, pp. 15, 17, 171, 173.
132. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, p. 98,
133. Saṃyuttanikāya, v, pp. 15-16.
134. Dīpavaṃsa, vii, 57-59.
135. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, p. 101.
136. Vinaya Texts, i, p. 30.
137. Mahāvaṃsa, V, v. 80

Vihāra was looked after by Thera Indagutta. In this Vihāra emperor Aśoka made arrangement for daily meals of sixty thousand bhikkhus[138]. Here the Third Buddhist Council was held during Aśoka's reign. In the Milindapañho[139] it is recorded that a merchant of Pāṭaliputra said to venerable Nāgasena standing at the cross-road not far from Pāṭaliputra : "This is the road leading to the Aśokārāma. Please accept my valuable blanket." Nāgasena took the same and the merchant departed therefrom in a happy mood. He then visited the Aśokārāma and met venerable Dhammarakkhita who taught Nāgasena the noble words of Buddha occuring in the three Piṭakas. Aśoka was said to send a minister to this monastery asking the resident-monks to hold there the Uposatha ceremony.[140] A compilation of the true Dhamma was made in this monastery.

Fa-Hien also saw a Mahāyāna Monastery at Pāṭaliputra[141], where he stayed for three years learning Sanskrit books and Sanskrit speech and writing out the Vinaya Rules.[142] It was related that from Vārāṇasī Fa-Hien went back east to Pāṭaliputra. His original object had been to search for copies of the Vinaya. In the numerous kingdoms of North India, however, he found one master transmitting orally the rules to another, but no written copies which he could transcribe. He had, therefore, walked far and reached Central India. Here, in the Mahāyāna Monastery, he witnessed a copy of the Vinaya, containing the Mahāsāṅghika Rules,—those which were observed in the First Great Council, while

138. Sāmantapāsādikā, ed. by J. Takakusu and M. Nagai, vol. i, (London Pali Text Society, 1924), p. 48. (puna rājā Asokārāmaṃ nāma mahāvihāraṃ kārāpetevā saṭṭhisahassānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ niccabhattaṃ paṭṭhapesi).

139. Milindapañho, pp, 17-18.

140. Mahāvaṃsa, V, 236.

141. Legge. A Record of Buddhist kingdoms, pp. 98-99.

142. Mookerji, R. K. Ancient Indian Education, p. 498.

the Buddha was still in the World.[143] The original copy was handed down in the Jetavana Vihāra. He also obtained a transcript of the rules in six or seven thousand gāthās, being Sarvāstivāda Rules,—those which were observed by the communities of monks in the land of Tsing; which also had all been handed down orally from master without being committed to writing. In the community there, moreover, he got the Saṁyuktābhidharma-Hṛdaya-(Śāstra), containing about six or seven thousand gāthās; he also got a sūtra of 2,500 gāthās; one chapter of the Parinirvāṇa-Vaipulya Sūtra, of about 5,000 gāthās; and the Mahāsāṅghika Abhidharma.[144]

ODANTAPURĪ

During the declining period of the Mahāvihāra of Nālandā another monastery was erected at Odantapurī or Odantapura by a certain Gopāla or Lokapāla who ascended the throne of Bengal in about 730 A.C.[145] This monastery was perhaps, located in the district of Patna in Bihar[146] and endowed with a magnificent library of Buddhistic and Brahmanical works.[147] About the location of Odantapurī S. C. Das depending on Sum-pa's account thought that it was "erected on a hill near the town of modern Behar."[148] The Tibetan scholar dGe-'dun-chos-'phel stated: "On the railway line from Patna to Rajgir, there is a station called Bihar-Sharif. If one looks to the west after reaching the station, one will see a low mound. This is said to contain

143. Giles, H. A. The Travels of Fa-Hien 399-414 A. D.; or the Record of the Buddhist kingdoms, pp. 64-65.

144. Legge, J. A. Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, p. 99.

145. Keay, F. E. Ancient Indian Education, p. 106.

146. Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, viii, p. 75; Dey, N. L. The Geographical dictionary of ancient and mediaeval India, p. 208.

147. Mazumdar, N. N. History of Education in ancient India, p. 97.

148. Sum-pa. dPag-bsam-ljon-bzan; ed. S. C. Das. Calcutta, 1908. Index cxlii.

the ruins of Odantapurī Vihāra. On this place was a famous monastery of India and our bsam-yas was modelled on it. There is nothing to prove that this was the spot except the saying that it was so. Anyway, this mound is a place where Na-ro-pa stayed and its name was Phullahari. There can be no doubt about that. In his rNam-thar, Chag lo-tsā-ba says that there is a hill at a distance of half day's journey by foot (tsha-'bog) to the north of Nālandā (where Phullahari was). In the north of Nālandā there is no other hill except this. Besides, the shape of the hill is stooping towards Tibet and this agrees with the description given by Mi-la-ras-pa."[149] The monastery at Odantapurī was built with the gold that was said to have been miraculously obtained by a Buddhist in mystical process. Tāranātha recorded : "Between Gopāla and Devapāla, Śrī Odantapurī temple was built. A tīrthika yogī, with purity of character, obtained miraculous power somewhere near Magadha. His name was Narada. He wanted to perform the ritual with a corpse (śava-sādhanā). For this purpose, he needed a companion who was to be physically strong, without any disease, possessing the nine signs of bravery, truthful, intellectually sharp, honest and versed in all crafts and branches of knowledge. He could not find any other person like that excepting a Buddhist upāsaka. He requested the upāsaka to assist him in the ritual with the corpse.' (The upāsaka) replied, 'I cannot be an assistant of a tīrthika.' He (Narada) said, 'you need not be a tīrthika. (Besides, by assisting me) you will find inexhaustible wealth. With that you can spread your own religion.' So he (the upāsaka) said, 'Then I shall go and ask my guru.' He went to his guru, told him everything and received the guru's permission and became Narada's assistant. As the ritual was nearing its fulfil-

149. dGe-'dun-chos-'phel. Guide to Buddhist sacred places in India (in Tibetan. Calcutta, 1939), p. 9.

ment, he (Narada) said, 'when the corpse sticks out its tongue you must catch it. If you can catch the tongue the first time it is stuck out, you will attain supreme success (mahā-siddhi). Being able to catch it on the second occasion will bring you intermediate success; being able to catch it for the last (third) time will bring small success. If you fail to catch it even on the third occasion, he (the dead) will first devour the two of us and will next make the whole world empty.' The upāsaka failed to catch the tongue for the first and second time. Then he sat with his own mouth near that of the corpse, ready to catch its tongue with his own teeth. And the third time (the corpse stretched out its tongue), he caught it with his teeth. Then the tongue became a sword and the corpse itself turned into gold. The upāsaka took hold of the sword and went round the corpse. With the sword in hand, he began to fly in the sky. The tīrthika said, 'I have done this for the sake of the world. Therefore, give me the sword.' The upāsaka said, 'Yes. I will give you the sword after I have had some sight-seeing.' So he flew to the top of Sumeru, circled it along with it four dvīpa-s and their upa-dvipa-s. Within a moment he came back and gave the sword to the tīrthika. He (the tīrthika) said, 'you take the golden body. You can have gold from it so long as you do not touch its bones. But do not spend the gold on evil purposes like wine and women. You can spend it for your own use and for holy undertakings. If you do that, any part of the body that you may slice off during the day will be replaced during night.' After saying this, he (Narada) flew to heaven with the sword. And the upāsaka, with the vetāla's gold built the colossal temple of Odantapurī. Odanta means 'flying over'; for the upāsaka flew in the sky over Sumeru along with its four dvīpas and saw these with his own eyes. That is why, he built the temple (Odantapurī) in its model (i. e. in the model

of Sumeru along with its four dvīpas). And the upāsaka's name became Unna Upāsaka. This temple was not built by any king or minister. The craftsmen and artists that worked for building the temple and its images were paid and fed from the gold of the vetāla's body. Only from this gold were maintained 500 bhikṣus and 500 upāsakas. Till his own death, that upāsaka (Unna) acted according to his own religion. He knew that the gold could not be used by others after his death. So he buried it under the earth with the prayer that it may benefit all living beings in future. And he gave his temple (Odantapurī) to Devapāla".[150] Sum-pa's account of the founding of Odantapurī was also based on the same legend. "At that time (i. e. between Gopāla and Devapāla)", wrote Sum-pa, "a Tāntrika called Nārada wanted to perform the ritual with a corpse to attain siddhi of the sword, met Unna, discussed with him and arranged for the ritual performance. They could convert the corpse into gold. With that gold, he (Unna) built Odantapurī near Nālandā, having for its model Sumeru with its four dvīpa-s."[151] From the above accounts it became evident that Odantapurī was built neither by any king nor any minister. The gold needed for it was obtained, miraculously though, by a Buddhist layman, who, only at the time of his death, handed over the Vihāra to king Devapāla. This was in flat contradiction to Bu-ston who thought that Odantapurī was built by Dharmapāla, the Pāla monarch. The legend of Bu-ston ran as follows : "At the time when, at an auspicious hour, the religious ceremonies were performed, (over the child, i.e., Dharmapāla) the head of a serpent haughtily rose up. The king (Gopāla) enraged, resolved to cut it off, but a ring was shown to him, on which he

150. Tāranātha. -dGos-'dod-Kun-'byun (Benares, 1964 ed.), pp. 192-194.

151. Sum-pa: dPag-bsam-ljon-bzaṅ ; ed. by S. C. Das (Calcutta, 1908 ed.), p. 111.

beheld the characters of the Nāgas. He then continued to worship and after that devoted himself to the education of the child, i.e., Dharmapāla. When the latter grew up, he became possessed of the desire of building a temple more magnificent than all the others and inquired the sooth-sayers (on this subject). The sooth-sayers, said that it was necessary to make a wick out of the cotton belonging to ascetics and Brāhmaṇas, to get oil from the houses of kings and merchants, to fetch an oil-burner from a place of penance, and to place the burning lamp before the tutelary deity—If thou shalt address an entreaty, the serpent of Dharmapāla will throw the lamp away, and at the place (where it falls) the temple must be built. This was done, but there suddenly appeared a raven that threw the lamp into a lake. (The Youth) was distressed, but in the night the king of the Nāgas with five serpent-heads came to him and said :—I am the father, and I will cause this lake to dry up. Thou shalt build thy temple in the place of it. (In order to bring this about) thou must perform sacrifices for seven weeks. This was accordingly done. On the 21st day the lake was dried up and (in its place) the monastery of Odantapurī was built."[152] This Monastery must have been in existence in the earlier half of the 8th century. The first Tibetan Buddhist Monastery, Sam-Ye (Sanskrit Acintya Vihāra), was built in A. C. 749 after the model of the Odantapurī Vihāra[153], then a famous Monastery[154]. In the Tibetan legends the names of some eminent scholars were associated with the Odantapurī Mahāvihāra. But among them Atiśa or Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna (A. C. 980-1054) was the most prominent. He studied at Odantapurī for two years under Dharmarak-

152. Bu-Tson. A History of Buddhism, (Obermiller, E. Transl.) pt. II, p. 157.

153. Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. III, pp. 10; Bandopadhyay, Rakhaldas. Bānglār Itihās, vol. I, (2nd ed.), p. 248.

154. Das. S. C. ed. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, II, p. 171.

ṣita, a Hīnayānist teacher. At the age of nineteen he obtained the sacred vows from Śīlarakṣita, the Mahāśāṅghika Āchārya of Odantapurī, who gave him the name of Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna[155]. From this place Atiśa passed on to Vikramaśīlā where he became the head of the institution and stayed there till he started for Tibet[156]. Abhayakaragupta, the head of the Mahāyāna School and a great writer, rendered many books into Tibetan at the Odantapurī Monastery. In one Tibetan legend the number of inmates of the Odantapurī Mahāvihāra was given as 12,000, which showed that it was a large and prosperous establishment.[157] But it is sad to note that this Vihāra could not survive for long. Nag-tsho mentioned "Odantapuri with its fifty-three monks."[158] Towards the end of the 11th century it must have gone far into decline. This splendid Vihāra was pillaged by Ikhtiyar and his troops in A. C. 1197[159]. According to Tārānātha[160], the emperor of Magadha fortified the Monastery and stationed some soldiers with whom the monks joined in repulsing the attackers. However the Vihāra with its rich collection was totally destroyed in 1199 A. C.[161], at the 38th regnal year of Govindapāladeva, who ascended the throne in 1161 A. C. Details of the destruction of the Odantapurī Vihāra may be summed up in the following manner: Ikhtiyar Ud-din Muhammad, son of Bakhtyar of the Turkish tribe of Khalji, who was also an officer subordinate to Qutub-

155. Das, Sarat Chandra. Indian Pandits in the land of snow (1965 ed.), p. 53.

156. Roerich. transl. The Blue Annals, Book V, vol. I.

157. Blue Annals, vol. II, p. 1,031.

158. Blue Annals, vol. I, p. 243, footnote 2.

159. Vidyabhushan, A. C. Prācīn Bhārater Sanskṛti O Sāhitya p. 123.

160. Schiefner. Tārānātha's History of Buddhism, pp. 259-261.

161. Das, Santosh Kumar. Educational system of the ancient Hindus, p. 382.

Ud-din Aibek had been carrying on the banner of Islam further afield during 1175 when Ghiyas-Ud-din Muhammad (of the Ghaznavids) led his first expedition into India. He invaded Bihar, took its capital Udantapur, put to death the Buddhist monks dwelling in its great monastery, and returned with his plunder, which included the library of the monastery, to make obeisance to Aibek, in the summer of 1193 A. C.[162]. The story of this assault was told long afterwards, in 1243 A.C., by an eye-witness to the Persian historian Minhāz who reported it in his work Tabaquat-i-Nāsiri thus : "It is said by credible persons that he, Bakhtyar Khilji (actually he was Ikhtiyar Khilji, son of Bakhtyar), went to the gate of the fort of Bihar with only two hundred horses and began the war by taking the enemy unawares. In the service of Bakhtyar (?) there were two brothers of great intelligence. One of them was named Nizamuddin and the other Samsuddin. The compiler of the book met Samsuddin at Lakhanauti (i.e. Lakṣaṇāvatī in Gaur in the district of Malda, North Bengal), in the year A. C. 1243 and heard the following story from him. When Bakhtyar (?) reached the gate of the fort and the fighting began, these two wise brothers were active in that army of heroes. Mahammad Bakhtyar (?) with great vigour and audacity rushed in at the gate of the fort and gained possession of the place. Great plunder fell into the hands of the victors. Most of the inhabitants of the place were Brāhmans with shaven heads (i. e the Buddhist monks). They were put to death. Large number of books were found there, and when the Mahammadans saw them, they called for some persons to explain their contents. But all of the men had been killed. It was discovered that the whole fort and city

162. Cambridge History of India, vol. III (Turks and Afghans), p. 42.

was a place of study (mādrāsā)—in the Hindi language the word Bihār (i. e. Vihāra) means a college."[163]

RĀJAGṚHA

Rājagṛha which had been identified with modern Rājir in the Patna district of Bihar, became from a very early period a sacred spot to the Buddhists. Buddha himself went into a retreat several times in this city. Besides, in the Sattapaṇṇi (Saptaparṇī) Cave of the Vaibhāra hill at this city was held the First Buddhist Council just after the Mahāparinirvāṇa of the Master.[164] Many eminent disciples of Buddha including Sārīputta and Moggallāna visited this city and were converted to Buddhism here.[165] Hence many monasteries subsequently were established to accommodate Buddha and his followers at Rājagṛha. We have already noted that the VELUVANA-ĀRĀMA at Rājgṛha, which was donated by king Bimbisāra was the first gift of an Ārāma to Buddha and the Saṅgha. It was surrounded by bamboos[166] and protected by a wall 18 cubits high and adorned with beautiful gates and towers decorated with lapis lazuli.[167] Following the accounts of Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang it may be located at a distance of one li from the north gate of the inner city, half mile south of the cemetery, 300 paces north-east of the Pippala Cave in the Mt. Vaibhāra and 200 paces to the south of the Kalandaka tank.[168] Thus being the first Vihāra ever presented to the Buddhist Order, the Veluvanārāma occupies an important place in the history of Buddhism. Another noteworthy Ārāma was the JĪVAKA-ĀRĀMA situated on

163. Elliot, Sir H. M. The History of India as told by its own historians, ed. by Dowson, John. (1953 Indian ed.), pp. 54-55. (Ghaznivide, Ghor and Slave dynasties, Minhaju-s-Siraj).

164. Vinayapiṭaka, Cullavagga, XI.

165 Kathāvatthu, i, p. 97 ; Sen, D. N. Rājgir and its neighbourhood, p. 4.

166. Saṃyuttanikāya, i, p. 52 ; Suttanipāta commentary, p. 419.

167. Sāmantapāsādikā, iii, p. 575.

168. Law, B. C. Historical geography of ancient India, p. 270.

the outskirts of Rājagṛha, at the short distance from the foot of the Gṛdhrakūṭa mountain.[169] It was Buddha's favourite resort when he sojourned at Rājagṛha. This Ārāma was presented to the Saṅgha by Jīvaka, the then leading physician and surgeon of the city. Archaeologists had unearthed partially the buried foundation of the Jīvakārāma.[170] Its ground-plan showed that it occupied an extensive area where had been discovered the foundations of two long elliptical structures parallel to one another, with an extensive open space in between, and of two large halls. The walls of the monastic abode was probably built of rubble and mud. Fa-Hien also had written about the Vihāra which was built by Jīvaka "in the garden of Ambapālī". Jīvaka invited Buddha with his 1250 disciples to this monastery.[171] Hiuen-Tsang, on the other hand, knew about another brick Vihāra which was established on the borders of steep precipice at the western end of mountain Gṛdhrakūṭa. It was high and wide and beautifully constructed. Its entrance was on the east. Here Buddha often stopped in former days and preached the Dhamma. Hiuen-Tsang saw here a figure of Buddha preaching the Law.[172]

NĀLANDĀ

But the most fully developed and well organised was the Nālandā Mahāvihāra[173] which was probably flourished during circa 450 A. C. to 1100 A.C.[174] Situated about fifty miles south-east of Patna in Bihar, Nālandā became

169. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 58, p. 12. Law, B. C. Rājagriha in ancient literature).

170. Indian Archaeology, 1954-55, pp. 16-17.

171. Legge, James. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, p. 82.

172. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western world, vol. ii, p. 153.

173. Indian Culture, vol. xv, no. 1, July, 1948 ; Wheeler J. Talboys. The History of India, vol. iii (1874 ed.), p. 270 ; Majumdar, R. C. Ancient India, pp. 482-483.

174. Gokhale B. G. Ancient India : history and culture, p. 137 ; Law, B. C. The Magadhas in ancient India, p. 42.

gradually a famous Buddhist centre[175] which was the place of birth and death of Sārīputta, one of the dearest disciples of Buddha. Dr. Fergusson wrote : "What Cluny and Clairvaux were to France in the Middle Ages, Nālandā was to Central India, the depository of all true learning, and the foundation from which it spread over all the other Buddhist lands".[176] Aśoka, the great Maurya monarch, had built a temple there in the 3rd century B.C. But its rise as a centre of learning has to be placed at about 450 A.C., as Fa-Hien in circa 410 A.C. did not mention its educational eminence.[177] We find that Nāgārjuna was sent to the Nālandā Mahāvihāra where he became a disciple of the great sage Rāhulabhadra and underwent a thorough training in all the faculties of studies open there at that time.[178] Asanga was for some years a professor at Nālandā.[179] It was under the active support and patronage of the Gupta emperors who were free from orthodoxy, that Nālandā steadily rose into prominence.[180] Śakrāditya (probably Kumāragupta I) of 414-455 A.C., laid the foundation of the greatness of Nālandā by establishing and endowing a monastery there. With the establishment of Śakrāditya's monastery, the site of Nālandā became attractive to the Gupta rulers. Prajñāvarma, a Korean monk who visited Nālandā about four decades after Hiuen-Tsang, recorded that the foundation of the Vihāra "was laid, but the work for some time was stopped". The Vihāra of Śakrāditya was afterwards added to by several

175. Choudhury, R. K. History of Bihar, pp. 78-79.

176 Fergusson, James. History of Indian and Eastern Architecture (1967 ed.), vol. i, p. 174.

177. The Dacca Review, vol. I, June 1911, no. III, pp. 100-108 (Dutt, Sukumar. The University of Nalanda).

178. Rgyan-Drug Mchog-Gnyis (Sikkim. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, 1962 ed.), p. 25.

179. ibid, p. 31.

180. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, vol. xiv, 1928, pt. i, pp. 1-23 (Heras, Rev. H. The Royal Patrons of the University of Nalanda).

Gupta kings who erected monasteries of their own on different sides of the original structure. Budhagupta, the son or grandson of Śakrāditya, founded a monastery to the south of the original one; Tathāgatagupta another to the east of Budhagupta's; Bālāditya erected a three-storeyed pavilion (a temple along with the monastery); Vajra, his son, erected a Vihāra to the west of Bālāditya's. Thus were built the five monasteries at Nālandā by the Gupta kings. It is impossible, at the present stage of our knowledge, to know about other vihāras built there. After Vajra, as Hiuen-Tsang recorded, a certain "King of Central India"[181] erected another vihāra to the north of Vajra's. This Central Indian King further "built round the edifices a high wall with one gate." So the individual monasteries which had been established one after another were brought into aggregation and the whole was converted into a "Great Monastery" (Mahāvihāra), a unitary establishment as its official seal showed bearing inscription: "Of the venerable Monk-community of Nālandā Mahāvihāra" (Nālandā-mahāvihārīyārya-bhikṣu-saṅghasya).[182] It may be noted that the monasteries founded during the Gupta period were planned in the old traditional pattern of the Kuṣāṇa age—an extensive square courtyard flanked on all sides with a running verandah with the monk's cells at the back. A few of these courtyards and their verandahs with rows of supporting pillars and the monk's cells behind are still visible. In some of them a shrine with a dias in front on a lower level is also found. Lectures and discourses were delivered in these courtyards; the preceptor used to stand or sit on the dias with a pulpit in front of him to spread his manuscripts upon, when the pupils squatted round him. In some of these courtyards a well and a small set of open ovens which were meant

181. He may be Yaśodharmadeva (A. C. 530-535) who defeated and killed Vajra.

182. Ghosh. A Guide to Nālandā (2nd ed.). p. 37.

to meet the occasional physical needs of the students during long discussions, could be found. At Nālandā the cells were more spacious and the stone beds more comfortable than those of other monastic establishments. Sometimes an extra cell was arranged evidently for storing books and personal belongings. Neither lighting arrangements nor bathrooms could be traced. But for laundering cloth, an arrangement could be found at one place where there was a set of cells with a central water-reservoir and a stone slab at the entrance of each cell for cleaning the dirty garment. A particular hour that was announced by striking a gong in the forenoon, were fixed for all residents to go out for a bath in ten great ponds situated in the campus. I-tsing wrote : "Sometimes a hundred, sometimes a thousand, leave the monastery and proceed in all directions to these ponds, where all of them take a bath".[183] Food for the inmates was usually prepared in a closet or compartment within the monastery and taken by the residents to their own cells for eating. We found that in course of time the Mahāvihāra at Nālandā had gradually developed as seat and centre of learning. Thus Nālandā evolved as a monastic university. Functioning as such over centuries it acquired a lasting fame and scholars from distant lands decided to resort to Nālandā for higher studies. Nālandā, being a seat of higher learning, had a system of specialization. "In the Nālandā Monastery," wrote I-tsing, "the number of priests is immense, and exceeds three thousand ; it is difficult to assemble so many together. There are eight halls and three hundred apartments in this monastery. The worship can only take place separately, as most convenient to each member. Thus it is customary to send out every day one precentor to go round from place to place chanting hymns, preceeded by monastic lay servants and children bearing incense and

183. I-tsing. A Record of the Buddhist Religion etc., tran. by Takakusu, pp. 108-109.

flowers. The precentor goes from hall to hall, and in each he chants the service—three or five ślokas (verses) in a high tone, and the sound is heard all around. At twilight he finishes this duty. In addition, there are some who, sitting alone and facing the shrine, 'praise the Buddha in their hearts'. There are others 'who, going to the temple, kneel side by side with their bodies upright, and, putting their hands on the ground, touch it with their heads, and thus perform the Threefold Salutation".[184] But the "Nālandā authorities could feel that a monastery without a library was like a castle without an armoury".[185] So elaborate scheme was adopted for a well-planned and splendid library within the Monastery to meet the varied demands of numerous teachers and students who were engaged in the study of different branches of learning.[186] Hiuen-Tsang saw that the works belonging to the eighteen sects and other books, such as, the Vedas, the Hetuvidyā, Śabdavidyā, the Cikitsāvidyā, the works on Magic (Atharvavidyā), the Sāṅkhya and "miscellaneous" works were studied there. He also noticed that at this Monastery there were one thousand men who could explain twenty collections of sūtras and śāstras ; five hundred who could explain thirty collections, and perhaps ten men, including the Master of the Law, who could explain fifty collections. Śīlabhadra alone had studied and understood the whole number. His eminent virtue and advanced age had caused him to be regarded as the chief member of the community.[187] We are told by Hwui-li on the arrangement of teaching prevalent in Nālandā that about one hundred pulpits were used and set up daily for the delivery of discourses, obviously in different "schools" and that "the students attended them without any fail even for a

184. Takakusu. A Record of the Buddhist Religion, pp. 154-55.

185. Altekar, A. S. Education in ancient India, p. 121.

186. Diwakar, R. R. ed. Bihar through the ages, p. 292 ; Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, vol. L1, pp. 67-96.

187. Bea amuel. The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 112.

minute."[188] Counting their total number, as recorded by I-tsing, at round 3,000, each discourse must have been attended by a class of about thirty students who had to study Mahāyāna philosophy irrespective of their subjects of specialisation. In describing the normal tempo of the academic and intellectual life of Nālandā Hiuen-Tsang wrote : "The day is not sufficient for the asking and answering of profound questions. From morning till night they engage in discussion ; the old and the young mutually help one another. Those who cannot discuss questions out of the Tripiṭaka are little esteemed and are obliged to hide themselves for shame. Learned men from different cities, on this account, who desire to acquire quickly a renown in discussion, come here in multitudes to settle their doubts, and then the streams (of their wisdom) spread far and wide".[189] I-tsing, the Chinese Scholar, who stayed for his studies at Nālandā for the long period of ten years (A.C. 675-685),[190] got copied there four hundred Sanskrit works amounting to five lacs verses.[191] This referred to the fact that the Monastery possessed a very rich collection—both Buddhistic and non-Buddhistic works which were either distributed or sold away. According to his observation when a Buddhist monk expired at Nālandā, his collection of books was added to the Library and other properties including non-Buddhistic works were disposed of.[192] This information showed how gradually through peaceful acquisition of dead one's valuable collections the Nālandā Monastic Library ultimately became a grand storehouse of priceless manuscripts.[193] I-tsing observed eight big

188. Ibid.

189. Beal, S. Bnddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, p, 170.

190. Mookerji, R. K. Ancient Indian Education ; It-sing. Records of the Buddhist Religion, p. xvii.

191. Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society viii, pt. 4, pp. 224-225,

192, It-sing. Record of Buddhist Religion, p, xvii.

193. Indian Librarian, vol. 9, no. 2, Sept. 1954, p. 54 (Chakravorti, S. N. Libraries in ancient times with special reference to India).

reading halls at the Nālandā Monastery. After him Tche-hong and Hōei-Ye, the two Korean monks, and another Chinese bhikkhu named Ke-Ye came to Nālandā Monastery to study by utilising its unique libraries which were rich containers of the Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist texts.[194] In the sixth year of Mahīpāla I the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā was copied at Nālandā by one Kalyāṇamitra.[195] In the fourth year of Rāmapāla's reign[196] and in the fourth year of Govindapāla[197] the same was again copied there. All the possible evidences showed that the Pālas exercised control over the Monastery of Nālandā, the Oxford of Buddhist India, upto their last days.[198] A copper-plate discovered during the excavation of the ruins of this Monastery mentioned the grant in the time of Devapāla, the Pāla king of Bengal, of some villages for the writing of the Dharmaratna or religious books besides other texts.[199] It was found that regular copyists were employed in the Monastery for copying books. The expenses were borne out by those who required the copies. Besides these professional copyists there were other devout souls who made the copying of the sacred works as a part of their duty. The students also must have made their own copies. The magnitude of the Nālandā Library implied that there were many well-versed teachers in charge of this library and their office must have involved considerable responsibility and tact.[200] Several thousands of monks lived in this Monastery, and the copying activity of all them must have made numerous and very frequent additions

194. Sen, Dinesh Chandra, Vṛhat Vaṅga, pp. 302-303.

195. Bendall, Catalogue of Buddhist Saṇskrit Manuscript in the Cambridge University Library. p. 101.

196. Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bodelian Library, p. 250.

197. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, NS. viii, p. 3.

198. Paul, Pramode Lal. The Early history of Bengal, ii, p. 25.

199. Indian Antiquary, xxi, pp. 257-258.

200. Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, viii, pt. 4, pp. 224-225.

to the Library.[201] One could find at Nālandā that in several monks' cells, an adjacent cell too small to live in was occasionally provided. Perhaps it was intended for the safe keeping of manuscripts borrowed for private study.[202] An examination of the clay sealings found at Nālandā from time to time had elicited the fact that many of the secular sealings fixed to palm-leaf documents were tied together with strings or palm-leaf strips used like tapes, of which impressions were left on their back. It was clear that the documents were impressed with seals on clay, which were sometimes partially exposed to fire, besides many of the monastic cells met their destruction by fire. This explained why the collection at Nālandā included sealings well-burnt (over-burnt in many cases), half-burnt or unburnt.[203] Detailed particulars about the library of the Nālandā Monastery may be gathered from the Tibetan sources. The library was situated in a special area known as the Dharmagañja (Mart of Religion)[204] which comprised three monumental edifices[205] called Ratnasāgara (Ocean of Jewels), Ratnadadhi (Sea of Jewels) and Ratnarañjaka (Jewel-adorned),[206] of which Ratnasāgara, that was a nine-storeyed building,[207] was specialised in the collection of rare and sacred works like Prajñāpāramitāsūtra and Tantrika books like Samājaguhya and others.[208] There were epigraphic records which showed definitely that financial arrangements were made for the preservation of

201. Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1809, p. 69.

202. Dutt, S Buddhist monks and monasteries of India, p. 337.

203. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1935-36 ed. by Blakiston, J. F. pp. 50-52.

204. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, ed. Das, S. C., p. 92.

205. Bokil, V. P. History of Education in India, pp. 199-200.

206. Sastri, Hirananda. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India (Nalanda and its epigraphical materials), no. 66, p. 7 ff.

207. Mazumdar, N. N. History of Education in ancient India, p. 93.

208. Sankalia, H. D. The University of Nalanda, p. 63 ; Sengupta, Padmini. Everyday life in ancient India (1955 ed.) p. 170.

the rich collections of the Nālandā Library. An inscription related that the celebrated king of Java and Sumatra, Bālaputradeva by name, had a monastery built at Nālandā,[209] and also requested his friend, king Devapāla of Bengal, to make a grant of five villages for the maintenance of this newly built monastery and towards the expenditure of adding to its Library manuscripts copied for the purpose (Dharmaratnasya lekhanārtham).[210] The Si-Yu-ki of Hiuen-Tsang described more elaborately the nature of collection in the Nālanda Monastery which paid greater attention to the philosophical and religious writings. In the account of this Chinese Pilgrim we find that manuscripts were arranged on stone shelves dug out on the walls and the shelf-guides for the manuscripts were inscribed on stones. The plam-leaf manuscripts were preserved for a long time and saved from dust and fire. The teachers were chiefs of the different sections of this renowned library of Nālandā. Usually, the teacher who used to teach a particular subject was the head of that particular subject-collection of the library and guided his students conveniently.[211] But it is sad to note that this celebrated Library which grew up step by step and which followed accurately the Fifth Law of Library Science, viz, "Library is a growing organism", as propounded by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan,[212] could not survive long. Curiously enough, there was no mention of the library buildings in the Chinese records. Tibetan legends supplemented to some extent the Chinese accounts. It was in these legends that mention was found of Nālaṇdā's great library buildings. A legend occurred in Tibetan history. These libraries, as was reported, perished

209. Kurashi, Guide to Nalanda, p. 4. The remains of the monastery of Bālaputradeva form one of the levels of Monastery No. I.

210. Epigraphia Indica, vol. xvii, p. 310.

211. Indian Libraian, Sept. 1962, v. 17, no. 2, p. 107. (Biswas, A. K. Libraries in Buddhist monasteries).

212. Ranganathan, S. R. Five Laws of Library Science (ed. 1957), Sec. 115.

in flames kindled by an incendiary. But the date when the event happened was unknown. The Tibetan text Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang presented a vivid account of the destruction of the Library thus: "After the Turaṣka raiders had made incursions in Nālandā, the temples and chaityas there were repaired by a sage named Mudita Bhadra. Soon after this, Kukuṭasiddha, Minister to the reigning king of Magadha, erected a temple at Nālandā. At its inauguration ceremony two heretic beggars (mendicants) came. Some naughty śramaṇeras threw dirty water on them, pressed them between two doors (and caused them other troubles), at which they became angry. One of them helped the other who entered a deep hole and in twelve years propitiated the sun-god. After performing a Yajña, they threw ashes in eighty-four Buddhist temples and all were on fire, especially Dharmagañja of Nālandā and the three great temples containing the scriptures. When all of them were ablaze, streams of water gushed forth (i.e. miraculously) from the Guhyasamāja (manuscript of a Tantric work) and the Prajñāpāramitā (manuscript of the great Mahāyānist Sūtra) from the ninth storey of the Ratnadadhi temple and many punthis (manuscripts) were saved. Afterwards the two heretics out of fear of the king tried to run away to Hasam (?) in the north. But they perished in the fire which they themselves had kindled."[213] Leaving aside the later legendary portion we find that the great library of Nālandā was completely destroyed. Thus ended "most insignificantly the most magnificent Temple of learning in Jambudvīpa" or the premier and pioneer National University of India.[214] That the buildings were destroyed by fire was evidenced, by the Bālāditya's inscription.[215] Pandit Hirananda Sastri

213. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang ; ed. by S. C. Das, p. 92.

214. Sankalia, H. D. The University of Nalanda, p. 241.

215. Archaeological Survey Report, iii, p. 122 ; Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, iv, p. 105.

who was for some time in charge of the Nālandā excavations[216] discovered a record inscribed on both sides of a large copper-plate surmounted by a seal soldered to its top, bearing an enblem, the Dharmacakra, flanked by two gazelles which was the insignia of Nālandā. It had suffered in the fire which destroyed the building. The seal bore the legend Śrī-Devapāladevasya, i.e. of Devapāladeva who, as we have already noted, was the third sovereign of the Pāla dynasty. This record told us of the grant of certain villages in the Rājagṛha and Gayā districts of the Śrīnagara, identified with Pāṭaliputra division,[217] for the up-keep of the Monastery at Nālandā and the comfort of bhikkhus coming there from the four quarters, for medical aid and for the writing of Dharmaratnas or religious books. It should be noted that the task of copying the manuscripts was considered a part of the scholar's duty at Nālandā.[218] We can only surmise that Nāland came into possession in course of its centuries-old history, a huge wealth of manuscript literature—both original works and copies of Sūtras and Śāstras. During the Pāla period, numerous manuscripts must have been written and copies of old manuscripts were made in the monasteries of Nālandā. But only few have survived. Three copies made in the Pāla age at Nālandā of the voluminous texts of the Aṣṭsāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā are known.[219] Stray copies of other works, e.g. Arthaviniścaya Sūtra and its commentary (dated A.C. 1199, samvat 316 of the Nepalese era), in the colophon of which Nālandā Mahāvihāra was mentioned as the

216. Asiatic Researches and Indian Antiquary, xxi.

217. Journal Asiatique, xii, pp. 307.

218. Calcutta Review, vol. x, pp. 39-61.

219. (A) Copy made in the 6th year of king Mahīpāla's reign, recovered from Nepal; (B) Copy made in the reign of Rāmapāla (circa 1084-1126 A. C.), cf. Catalogue of Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts in the Bodlein Library, vol. ii, p. 250; (C) Copy made in the reign of Gobindapāla in the later half of the 12th century, cf. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, new series, 1876, p. 3.

place where the author was living, had been discovered outside Indian borders.[220]

The monk-teachers of Nālandā, who were regarded as "dignified and grave"[221] and "venerable and learned", enjoyed prestige in the society. The senior and erudite among them used to ride in sedan-chairs when they went out, with attendants to carry their baggage, probably as a mark of respect. Hiuen-Tsang was very much impressed by dazzle of colour and splendour of Nālandā's "richly adorned towers and fairy-like turrets, the four-storeyed outside courts, their dragon-like projections and coloured eaves, carved and ornamented pearl-red pillars, richly adorned balustrades and roofs covered with tiles that reflect the light in a thousand shades"[222]. In Mālāda's dedicatory inscription dated a century after Hiuen-Tsang we also get a description of Nālandā. The inscriptson recorded : "Nālandā has scholars well known for (their knowledge of) sacred texts···She has a row of vihāras whose spires lick the clouds. That (row of vihāras) seems to have been built by the creator himself like a garland hanging up high. Nālandā has temples which are brilliant with the network of rays from various jewels set in them and it is the pleasant abode of a learned and virtuous Saṅgha ; and resembles Sumeru, the charming residence of the noble Vidyādharas"[223]. The lofty towers of Nālandā, mentioned above, became the most spectacular object of the campus standing magnificently like arrows, topping the edifices and soaring above the boundary-wall.

Excavations had shown that the Nālandā Monastery

220. The Library of the University of Delhi is in possession of a copy of the Arthaviniścaya Sūtra and its Commentary (photostat), discovered in a monastery of Tibet.

221. Beal, S. Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 112.

222. Beal, S. Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, pp. 111-112.

223. Epigraphia Indica, vol. xx, p. 45 ; Ghosh. Guide to Nālandā, pp. 34-35.

occupied an area at least one mile long and half a mile broad. The buildings for both residence and worship were built according to a preconceived plan. The edifices there were superb, and of several storeys in height. The upper rooms, according to Hwui-li, towered above the clouds and enabled a spectator to see how they changed their shape. There were also ponds covered with blue lotuses. The whole area of the Monastery was encircled by a surrounding wall with a door on the southern side[224].

But it is indeed painful to note how this grand monastic establishment with several lofty buildings were destroyed in the subsequent years. The end of Nālandā is shrouded in mystery. Although its grand library had perished long ago, the Monastery still survived even at a later date. The Tibetan legends spoke of several raids on Nālandā by Turuṣkas. Tārānātha wrote : "The Turaṣkas conquered the whole of Magadha and destroyed many monasteries ; at Nālandā they did much damage and the monks fled abroad"[225]. But the latest report about the condition of Nālandā after the worst had been done by the Muslim invaders, came from a Tibetan monk named Dharmasvāmī who said that Nālandā, though doomed to desolation, were fated not to perish, for teaching and learning were going on there over at least four after-decades. There were still to be observed "seven great lofty pinnacles" (śikharas) and out to the north, fourteen, which were still existed like sentinels over a scene of utter ruin and devastation[226]. One could then see there eighty small vihāras, damaged by the Turaṣkas and deserted by monks. It is quiet impossible to say when these small vihāras which were probably built by Rājā Buddhasena and his queen of Magadha, had gone up. A thrilling account of the last days of Nālandā was preserved in a Tibetan text kept in

224. Beal. The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, pp. 109-114.

225. Schiefner. transl. Tārānātha's History of Buddhism, p. 94.

226. Roerich. Biography of Dharmasvāmin (Patna, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institue, 1959), p. 91.

a monastery of Central Tibet. A photostatic copy of the text which was entitled "Biography of Chag lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal", a Tibetan name of Dharmasvāmī, was brought by Rahula Sankrityayana. The Tibetan monk-pilgrim who was referred to in the account, travelled some areas of eastern India between 1234-36 A.C. Dr. Sukumar Dutt had retold the experiences, as described in this text, of the monk thus: "Somewhere here (Nālandā) a nonogenarian monk-teacher, named Rāhula Śrībhadra, had made his dwelling and taught Sanskrit grammar to seventy students. He was in the last stage of poverty and decrepitude. He lived on a small allowance for food given by a Brāhmaṇa lay disciple named Jayadeva who lived at Odantapura. Time and again came threats of an impending raid from the military headquarters there. Jayadeva himself became a suspect. In the midst of these alarms, he was suddenly arrested and thrown into a military prison at Odantapura. While in captivity, he came to learn that a fresh raid on Nālandā was brewing and managed to transmit a message of warning to his master advising him to flee post-haste. By then everyone had left Nālandā except the old man and his Tibetan disciple. Not caring for the little remainder of his own life, the master urged his pupil to save himself by quick flight from the approaching danger. Eventually, however,—the pupil's entreaties prevailing—both decided to quit. They went—the pupil carrying the master on his back along with a small supply of rice, sugar and a few books—to the Temple of Jñānanātha at some distance and hid themselves. While they remained in hiding, 300 Muslim soldiers arrived, armed and ready for the assault. The raid came and passed over. Then the two refugees stole out of their hiding place back again to Nālandā."[227] The above account further related that the Tibetan pupil

227. Dutt, Sukumar. Buddhist monks and monasteries of India: their history and their contribution to Indian Culture (London, George Allen and Unwin ltd. 1962), pp. 347-348.

could at the end finish his studies and, after a short stay, with the approval of the teacher left the place. The famous libraries of Nālandā had been destroyed many days ago and so Dharmasvāmī could not collect a single manuscript of the sacred texts to copy. Such was the ignoble catastrophe of the most noble and grand Buddhist establishment of ancient India! Nālandā earned such a great reputation in the field of scholarship that it became in the eyes of later generations of the Tibetans the name and symbol for a monastic establishment which concerned itself with learning. Thus the monastery that was established in Tibet in A.C. 1351 to maintain a 'school of philosophy' was called 'Nālandā.' It seemed that this Tibetan monastery bearing proudly the name of Nālandā was designed on latter's liberal traditions of culture. A short account of this monastery was found in the "Blue Annals" which recorded: "This great monastery was a place filled with monks of different sects, where preaching and study continued without interruption···It was a self-refuge for preachers who wandered about the country."[228]

TILAḌAKA

Situated at a place which was about twenty-one miles west of Nālandā the TILAḌAKA SAṆGHĀRĀMA was another grand monastic establishment of Magadha. Hiuen-Tsang observed that this Monastery had "four halls, belvederes of three stages, high towers, connected at intervals with double gates that open inwards. It was built by the last descendant of king Bimbisāra. He made much of high talent and exalted the virtuous. Learned men from different cities and scholars even from distant countries flock together in crowds, and reaching so far, abide in this Saṅghārāma. There are one thousand priests in it who study the Great Vehicle. In the road facing the middle gate there are three Vihāras, above which are placed the

228. The "Blue Annals"; trans. by Roerich, vol. ii, pp. 1081-84.

connected succession of metal rings with bells suspended in the air ; below they are constructed storey above storey, from the bottom to the top. They are surrounded by railings, and the doors, windows, the pillars, beams, and staircases are all carved with gilt copper in relief, and in the intervals highly decorated. The middle Vihāra contains an erect image of Buddha about thirty feet high. On the left is an image of Tārā Bodhisattva ; on the right, one of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. Each of these images is made of metallic stone ; their spiritually composed appearance inspires mysterious awe, and their influence is felt from far. In each Vihāra there is a measure of relics which emit a supernatural brilliancy, and from time to time shed forth miraculous indications".[229] During I-tsing's travel the Tiladaka Monastery which was a very large establishment, provided residence for 1,000 monks.[230]

FULLAHARI

In Eastern India a Buddhist Vihāra at Fullahari was in its full splendour during the 9th century A.C. It was located in North Bihar, probably near modern Monghyr. We are further informed that at this Monastery many books were either written or translated into other languages.[231]

VIKRAMAŚĪLĀ

The Vikramaśīlā Mahāvihāra, in origin, was the later contemporary of Nālandā, being established by Dharmapāla, a distinguised Pāla monarch of Bengal,[232] and became eminent during the periods of the decadence of the Nālandā Mahāvihāra. The Tibetans knew the monastery as

229. Beal, S Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, pp. 102-103.

230. I-tsing. A Record of the Buddhist Religion, trans. by Takakusu, p. 184.

231. Ray, Nihar Ranjan. Bāṅgālīr Itihās, p. 728.

232. Choudhury, R. K. History of Bihar, p. 117.

Vikramaśīla rather than Vikramaśīlā. In the "Life of Atīśa" translated by S. C. Das, it was a suggested that "according to some writers" the monastery owed this name' 'to the high moral character of its monks".[233] But Dr. R. C. Majumdar said : "The reference to the vihāra as Śrīmad-vikramaśīla-deva-mahāvihāra shows that Vikramaśīla was another name or biruda of Dharmapāla (or Devapāla) who founded it".[234] It was corroborated by the following passage of the Rāmacarita : "Yuvarāja Hāravarsha belonged to the Pāla family of Bengal.... It has been suggested that Vikramaśīla, the father of Yuvarāja, was another name of Dharmapāla, who founded the Vikramaśīla monystery and Hāravarsha is indentical with Devapāla".[235] Like the Cūḍāmaṇivarman vihāra of Southern India, that was named after its founder-patron the Śailendra King Cūḍāmaṇivarman, the Vikramaśīla vihāra also might have owed its name to its founder-patron King Vikramaśīla who was probably Dharmapāla.[236] In the Tibetan source it was found that "because of its being the site where a Yakṣa...of the name of Vikrama was suppressed, as it was, it was called the Vikrama Śīlā".[237] We learn further that "the Vihāra became known by four names in the four quarters. In Tibet it was famed under the name of Vikrama Śīlā. Tārānātha said that Dharmapāla "built about fifty Buddhist centres in all, among which thirty-five were centres for the study of Prajñāpāramitā. Śrī Vikramaśīla vihāra (was built) on the bank of the Gaṅgā in the north of Magadha on top of a hill. At its centre was built a shrine with a life-size image of Mahābodhi. Around this (were built) fifty three small shrines

233. Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India, I. i, 11.

234. Majumdar, R. C, ed. History of Bengal, vol. I, p. 115n.

235. ibid, i, p. 123.

236. Chattopadhyaya, Alaka. Atīśa and Tibet : Life and Works of Dipaṃkara Śrijñāna in relation to the History and Religion of Tibet (Calcutta, 1967 ed.), p. 106.

237. Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India, i, 11.

for the study of guhyatantra and another fifty four common temples. Thus the number of temples was one hundred and eight and also the outer wall. He (Dharmapāla) provided for the livelihood of one hundred and eight paṇḍitas".[238] Sum-pa stated : "On the north of Magadha, on the bank of the Gaṅgā and top of a hill was built (by Dharmapāla) the Vikramaśīla vihāra, which had one hundred and seven shrines around the Central Hall and an outer wall. It was supported for the livelihood of one hundred and eight paṇḍitas. At that time Prajñāpāramitā and Samāja were widely spread".[239] Among the religious establishments sponsored by Dharmapāla, both Tārānātha and Sum-pa mentioned only Vikramaśīla by name. Depending on the same tradition both of them agreed to the location and importance of the monastery. The biographer of Atīśa also depending on the same tradition said : "Ācārya Kampala, a learned professor of the school of Buddhist Tantras at Śrī Nālandā, who had obtaind the Siddhi or perfection in the mahāmudrā mysticism, was once struck with the features of a bluff rocky hillock which stood in the bank of the Ganges. Observing its peculiar fitness for the site of a vihāra he remarked that under royal auspices it could be turned into a great place for the use of the Saṃgha.... By dint of foreknowledge he also knew that one time there on that hill a great Vihāra would be built. It is said that in course of time Kampala was born as Dharmapāla, the renowned King of Magadha. He built the monastery of Vikrama Śīlā on that hill...the king furnished the Vihāra with four establishments, each consisting of twenty-seven monks belonging to the four principal sects of the Buddhists."[240] As regards the real founder of the monastery Dr. R. C.

238. Taranath. d Gos— 'dod—kun— 'byuṅ (Beneres, 1964 ed.), pp. 200-201.

239. Sum-pa. dPag—bsam—ljon—bzaṅ ; ed by S. C. Das (Calcutta, 1908 ed.); pp 112-113.

240. Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India I. i, pp. 10. 11.

Majumdar wrote: "According to other tradition, however, Devapāla is regarded as its founder".[241] But such a view did not gain support from other scholars.

The actual location of the Vikramaśīla Vihāra is still unknown. Cunningham thought that it could be the modern village Silao, about three miles from Baragaon near ancient Nālandā and six miles to the north of Rajgir, the capital of Magadha, in the subdivision of Bihar in the district of Patna.[242] But S. C. Das suggested that it could have been modern Sultanganj near Bhagalpur. He wrote: "Just as the Brāmaṇas had their city on the holy land of the Uttara Vāhinī Gaṅgā, the Buddhists whose veneration for the sacred stream was no less than that of their adversaries, the Brāhmaṇas, had built Vikramaśīlā on a rival spot situated on the northern reach of the Ganges. These circumstances, and the account of its being originally built on a rocky hill on the right bank of the Ganges, and the similarity of the names Vaishkaran with the name Vikrama, might tempt one to risk the identification of Vikramaśīlā with Vaishkaran Śīlā of modern Sultanganj near Bhagalpur.[243] S. C. Vidyabhusana also located Vikramaśīlā somewhere in the same place.[244] On the other hand Nundalal De thought that "a day's sail below Sultanganj is situated a projecting steep hill called Patharghata, which is a spur of the Coloong range. It is about six miles to the north of Coloong, twenty-four miles to the east of Bhagalpur and and twenty-eight miles to the east of Champānagara, the ancient Champā, the capital of Aṅga···there can be no reasonable doubt that Patharghata near Coloong in the district of Bhagalpur was the ancient Vikramaśīlā and that the ruins upon it are the remains of the celebrated

241. Majumdar, R. C. ed. History of Bengal vol. i, pp. 115n.

242. Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, viii. 83,

243. Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India, I. i, pp. 10n.

244. Bhāratī (Bengali monthly), Vaiśakha, 1315 B. S.; Sāhitya (Bengali monthly), Śravaṇa, 1314 B.S.

monastery which existed for about four centuries from the middle of the eighth century to the later end of the twelfth century A. D."[245] J. N. Samaddar also held such a view and thought that it was "the best identification" of the site of Vikramaśīlā.[246]

During its flourishing period Vikramaśīlā was well-known to the Tibetans ; there was indeed regular intercourse between Vikramaśilā and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries[247]. The Vikramaśīlā Mahāvihāra was encircled by a wall which was probably built by one Buddhajñāna-pratiṣṭha. Outside this surrounding wall were 107 temples, while within the enclosure were fifty-eight institutions (saṁsthās) with 108 professors (paṇḍitas)[248]. Tārānātha referred to its six Gates each of which was guarded by a distinguished professor (paṇḍita)[249]. These six "gate-keepers" functioned contemporaneously during the reign of Canaka (A. C. 955-83) who, according to Tārānātha, was "not counted among the 'seven Pālas' because he was not of the Pāla family." They were : Ācārya Ratnākara-śānti of the Eastern Gate, Vāgīśvarakīrti of the Western Gate, Naropā of the Northern Gate, Prajñākaramati of the Southern Gate, Ratnavajra of the first Central Gate, Jñānaśrīmitra of the second Central Gate. They were all eminent scholars whose works are extant in the Tibetan Tānjur and Kānjur. Whatever description we get about the monastery from the Tibetan sources it is evident that the establishment was grand and extensive. We find that during the reign of King Rāmapāla its head was Abhayā-karagupta and it accommodated 160 professors and 1,000 resident monks[250]. But according to Nag-tsho the number

245. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, (N.S.) 1901, pp, 1 ff.

246. Samaddar, J. N. Glories of Magadha (Patna, 1927 ed.), p. 157.

247. Das, Sarat Chandra. Indian Pandits in the land of snow (Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1965 ed.), pp. 60-64.

248. Das, S. C. ed. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, p. 113.

249. Schiefner. trans. Tārānāth's History of Buddhism, pp. 234-235.

250. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang ; ed. by S. C. Das, p. 130.

of monks dwindled to about a hundred, probably at the period of Muslim raids in this part of the country[251]. During the reign of King Mahīpāla, Dīpaṅkara was invited to join the Vikramaśīlā monastery as the principal ācārya. The vihāra prospered much ; more accommodation for the monks was arranged and new subjects were introduced for study and teaching under his guidance there. Drawing a large number of new bhikkhus to the vihāra he adopted for them a new method of teaching. Sum-pa stated : "When Bheyapāla reigned for thirty-two years, the six gate-keepers (dvārapālas) passed away. After them, Jo-bo-rje Dīpaṃkara-śrijñāna, whose biography will be briefly mentioned later, was upādhyāya (mkhan-po) of Vikramaśīla. He also nourished (bskyans) Odantapuri".[252] Tāranatha also recorded : "After that King Bheyapāla...And during the reign of this King, after the sixgate-keepers, Dīpaṃkara-Śrījñāna, famed as (graps-pa) Jo-bo-rje Śrī Atiśa, was invited as the Upādhyāya (mkhan-po) (of Vikramaśīla). By him was also nourished (bskyans) Odantapurī".[253] There were erected two brilliant statues of Nāgārjuna and Dipaṅkara in the Vikramaśīlā monastery. These statues which were thought to be built by the students during the life-time of Dīpaṅkara were installed on two sides of the entrance to the Vihāra.[254]

This grand Monastery came into existence during the days of Tantric Buddhism when occult sciences and magic had become favourite subjects of study. Thus consequently Vikramaśīlā became almost identified with the study and cultivation of Tantric Buddhism and there instructions were imparted also in its different branches.[255] This

251. Blue Annals, vol. i, p. 243.

252. Sum-pa. -dPag-bsam-ljon-bzaṅ ; ed. by S. C, Das (Calcutta, 1908 ed.), p. 118.

253. Tāranātha. -d Gods-'dod-kun-'byuṅ, (Benares, 1964 ed.) p. 223.

254. Chattopadhy, Alaka. A tīśa and Tibet : Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna in relation to the history and religion of Tibet (1967 ed.) pp. 411-412.

255. Paul, P. L, (The) Early history of Bengal, pp. 26-27.

Mahāvihāra which gradually transformed into a monastic University is said to have included six colleges[256] and was a centre not only of Tantric studies, but also of Logic and Grammar.[257] With its own manuscripts the University of Vikramaśīlā in course of time acquired a rich "collection of books". It contained many rare works on Tantra, Grammar, Metaphysics and Logic for the teaching of which this University became renowned.[258] Here also pupils and teachers occupied themselves with the tasks of copying manuscripts. One of them copied in the time of Gopāla II is now to be found in the British Museum.[259] The Academic Council of the Vikramaśīlā University was in charge of the libraries which in addition to storing books, undertook also the work of copying.[260] It was the Library which took steps to renew the worn out and damaged manuscripts and made liberal provision for meeting the constant demand of the outside public, particularly of Tibet, for copies of books in its possession. The Tanjur and the Kanjur hold a good evidence of the bulk of Tibetan translations of Sanskrit works prepared at Vikramaśīlā not only by Tibetan, but by Indian scholars as well. They may be traced in the Catalogues.[261] Dīpaṅkāra the great himself translated into Tibetan at Vikramaśīlā with the help of a learned monk named Vīryasiṁha a number of his own works.[262] The copying work was to

256. Smith, V. A. Early history of India, (4th ed.), p. 44.

257. Eliot. Hinduism and Buddhism, vol. ii, p. 111.

258. Samaddar. The Glories of Magadha, pp. 151, 153, 512.

259. Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society viii, pt. 4, p. 225.

260. Vidyabhushan, Amulya Charan. Prācīn Bhārater Sanskṛti-O-Sāhitya, p. 123.

261. cf. Cordier's Catalogue du Fonds Tibetain de la Bibliotheca Nationale ; and A complete catalogue of Tibetan Buddhist canons with a catalogue-index, published by Tohoku Imperial University, Sendai (Japan), 1934.

262. Bose, Phanindra Nath. Indian teachers of Buddhist universities, pp. 49-81

some extent done by the monk-teachers and students, but clerks also had to be engaged to cope with the increased demand. The Mahāvihāra flourished till the end of the thirteenth century.[263] It is thought that the invaders headed by Bukhtijar Khilji at the time of Muhammad Ghori destroyed the Monastery thinking it to be a fortress by mistake.[264] During this raid all the resident scholars and teachers, save few who could manage to leave, were slain, and all the library books except those which could be carried off by the few that escaped were burnt. Thus was destroyed miserably the grand storehouse of costly manuscripts of Vikramaśīlā.[265] It has rightly been said that "if Nālandā fulfilled the dictum of Newman that a University is a place of learning implying the assemblage of strangers from various places in one spot, the royal University of Vikramaśīlā satisfied the dictum of Carlyle that a true University is a collection of books."[266] Dharmasvāmī, a Tibetan Lāmā, who visited Nālandā in the thirteenth century had left for us a valuable account of the last days of the Vikramaśīlā Mahāvihāra.[267] "Vikramaśīlā was still existing in the time of the visit of elder Dharmasvāmī (A. C. 1153-1216) and of the Kāśmirī Paṇḍita Śākya Śrībhadra (A. C. 1145-1225), but when Dharmasvāmī visited the country there were no traces of it left: the Turaṣka soldiery, having razed it to the ground, had thrown the foundation stones into the Gaṅgā". Thus it is obvious that even during the period of Śākya Śrībhadra's visit to Magadha, the Vikramaśīlā Monastery had not been totally destoryed ; it was wholly effaced by 1235.

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263. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Monograph, no. 24, pp. 43-44 ; Vakil, K. S. Education in India : ancient period, p. 24 ; Law, B. C. Early Indian monasteries, p. 9.

264. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1910, pp. 150-151 ; Mitra, R. L. Nepalese Buddhist literature, p. 229.

265. The Modern Review, April, 1963, p. 283 (Barua, Dipak kumar. Ancient Indian libraries).

266. Samaddar. The Glories of Magadha, p. 116.

267. Roerich. Biograpph of Dharmasvāmin, p. 64.

As regards the general administration, we find that the Mahāvihāra was presided over by the Chief Abbot. Other members of the administrative board were assigned to different duties, such as, the ordination of the novices, supervision of servants, distribution of food and fuel, assignment of monastic activities, etc. The monk-professors led a very simple life. A professor here was called an Ācārya. was said that the cost of maintaining one of them was equal to the cost of supporting four ordinary monks[268]. The head of the monastic establishment at Vikramaśītā was called Adhyakṣa who, as well as the gate-keepers (Dvārapāla) held their posts by commission from the king. Among the adhyakṣas mention may be made of Buddhajñānapāla who was the founder's contemporary and the first adhyakṣa, Jetāri who was at first a dvārapāla and later an adhyakṣa, Abhayākaragupta, Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna and Śākya Śrībhadra. The academic degrees like 'Paṇḍita' (learned) and 'Mahāpaṇḍita' (vastly learned) of this monastic university were conferred by the king. The walls It of the Mahāvihāra were decorated with the pictures of the most eminent paṇḍitas and mahāpaṇḍitas.[269] Both the Nālandā and Vikramaśilā Mahāviharas became enriched by the munificent grants of the emperors. But at Nālandā the entire machinery was fashioned on a democratic line, while at Vikramaśilā[270] the king was the chief authority and the business of the Monastery was carried on with his approval. People took it as a "Royal University." The king himself being the Chancellor used to distribute degrees, diplomas and prizes to the scholars, unlike the Nālandā University where the most distinguished teacher

268. Bose, P. N. Indian teachers of the Buddhist Universities, p. 35.

269. Vidyabhushan, S. C. Indian Logic: Mediaeval School, Appendix C, p. 151.

270. Rāmacarita (Gaekward Oriental Series), p. xxii ; Paul, P. L. The Early history of Bengal, ii, p. 26 ; Samaddar. Glories of Magadha, p. 157.

was usually elected the head of the establishment and thus the university became free from royal domination.[271]

KĀPAṬYA

In ancient Bengal there was either a vihāra or a place having a monastery, named Kāpaṭya. It had been stated that Prajñāvarman and his preceptor Bodhivarman hailed from Kāpaṭya of Bengal.[272] So once the place or vihāra named Kāpaṭya was glorified by a Buddhist establishment.

SANNAGAR AND BALAṆḌĀ

We further see that the vihāras of Sannagar or Baḍanagarī and of Balaṇḍā, which were located in ancient Bengal were quite well-known. Mm. H. P. Sastri[273] noticed a place called Bālāṇḍā Paganā that was once been the seat of a Buddhist monastery ; but the place was then thoroughly a Muslim centre. A Buddhist ācārya named Siddheśvara Vanaratna (A. C. 1384-1468) dwelt at the Sannagar Vihāra and translated there many texts into Tibetan.[274] On the other hand, we find that a copied manuscript of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpārmamitā was written at the Balaṇḍā Monastery.[275]

BĀHULĀRĀ

One would be highly amazed to see numerous brick-monuments technically known as the Buddhist stūpas around the Siddheśvara temple of Bāhulārā in the Bankura district of West Bengal. These stūpas were nothing but the sepulchral monuments within which originally the bodily remains of Buddha and his disciples were deposited with

271. Sen, Dinesh Chandra. Vṛhat Vaṅga, p. 304.

272. Dasgupta, Nalininath. Bāṅglay Bouddhadharma (Calcutta, A. Mukherjee & Co., 1355 B.S.), p. 213.

273. Journal of Bengal and Orissa Research Society, vi, pt. i, p. 61.

274. Ray, N. R. Bāṅgālīr Itihās : Ādiparva (Calcutta Book Emporium, 1356 B. S.), p. 633.

275. ibid, p. 634.

care and veneration. Observing these little brick-built mounds of the 10th to 11th century A. C. the archaeologists presumed that this place of Bāhulārā once was a famous Buddhist worship centre with a Vihāra and a temple before the Śaivas came and occupied it.

BĀRĀGRĀM

The same conclusion may be arrived at in respect of the village named Bārāgrām in the Birbhum district (West Bengal) where sculptures of Vajrayāna Buddhism lay scattered here and there. Images of Buddha seated in the Vajrāsana had also been discovered. An image of a goddess named Bhuvaneśvarī who was seated on a lion, was worshipped at Bārāgrām. Iconographic features seemed to show that Bhuvāneśvari of Bārāgrām was none other than Prajñāpāramitā of the Buddhists. There had been found another image of a deity named Uṣṇiṣavijaya seated on the lotus in vajrāsana with four mouths. Besides these, numerous images of Buddhist Tārā might be noticed in this modern village. So from all these archaeological evidences one may conclude that once this village was the seat of Buddhist monastic activities.

DEVĪKOṬ

There existed also a monastery at Devīkoṭ or Devakoṭa near the village of Bāngarh that lies about eighteen miles south of Dinajpur town in North Bengal[276] and Advayavajra, a renowed Tantric teacher, Udhilipā and bhikkhunī Mekhalā used to live in that Vihāra.

TRAIKŪṬAKA

The Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang spoke of a Monastery named Traikūṭaka Vihāra of Bengal adjoining Magadha.[277] Here

276. Majumdar, R. C. ed. The History of Bengal, vol. i, (University of Dacca), p. 25.

277. Das, S. C. ed. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, pt. i, p. 116.

Haribhadra wrote his well-known commentary on the Abhisamayālaṅkāra under the patronage of Dharmapāla. This monastery was situated evidently somewhere in West Bengal "as there is mention of a Traikūṭaka Devālaya being unearthed in the Rāḍhā country."[278]

SOMAPURA

Like the Vikramaśīlā Monastery in Magadha, the Mahāvihāra of Somapura or Somapurī occupied a position of pre-eminence in ancient Bengal ever since the days of Dharmapāla.[279] It was located in a place which was situated at a distance of three miles to the west of the Jamalgunje railway station in the district of Rājshahi.[280] This famous monastery of Somapura (now known as Paharpur) was really a great centre of learning. The magnificence of the ruins of Paharpur led K. N. Dikshit to write: "The second and the third kings of the dynasty, Dharmapāla and Devapāla, built up at the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th centuries A. D. a large empire··· It was during this period that many new Buddhist temples and vihāras must have been established in Bengal under royal patronage. The biggest, and most important of these must have been the establishment at Paharpur which received royal patronage from the kings of the early Pāla empire."[281] He further observed: "Prosperity seems to have returned at the end of the tenth century when Mahīpāla I founded the second Pāla empire··· About the end of the 10th century or beginning of the 11th century, the prosperity of the establishment was reflected in a wholesale renovation in the Main Temple and in the monastic cells where a number of ornamental pedestals seem to

278. Majumdar, R. C. ed. The History of Bengal, vol. i. (University of Dacca), p. 417.

279. Epigraphia Indica, xxi, pt. iii, July, 1931. (Nālandā Inscription of Vipulaśrīmitra).

280. Law, B. C. Historical Geography of ancient India, p. 248.

281. Dikhsit, K. N. Excavations at Paharpur (1938 ed.), p. 5.

have been installed and at the shrine of Tārā in the Satyapīr Bhiṭā numerous votive stūpas were constructed. After Mahīpāla and his son Nayapāla, the fortunes of the Pāla dynasty again suffered a reverse and Bengal was overrun in turn by the Chedi King Karṇa (Central India), the Chola King Rajendra and a local Kaivarta chief named Divya··· In the 12th century the sovereignty of Bengal passed over to the Senas··· . In the beginning of the 13th century came the onslaught of the Muhammadans who before long overrun the whole of North Bengal and it is not improbable that the Paharpur temple with its conspicuous height must have been one of the first places to attract the attention and stimulate the iconoclastic zeal of the invaders. Thereafter the temple and monastery seems to have fallen into desolation".[282] Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna Atīśa, the well known Buddhist monk from Bengal, lived for years in the Somapura monastery under his spiritual preceptor Ratnākara Śānti who was the sthavira of the vihāra and translated here the Mādhyamakaratnapradīpa of Bhāvya into Tibetan in collaboration with Vīryasiṁha and his own Tibetan disciple Nagtsho.[283] The references to the handling of several manuscripts by numerous scholars and teachers in this monastic University gave us some hints on the existence of some sort of a book-collection which may roughly be called a library.[284] Vipulaśrīmitra, a Buddhist monk, at the middle of the 12th century built a shrine of Tārā, which had been identified with that of the same goddess, exposed at Satyapīr Bhiṭā at Paharpur.[285] He had also offered a casket to the Temple of Khaṣarpaṇa, a Buddhist deity, for

282. ibid, pp. 5-6.

283. Cordier, P. Catalogue du fonds Tibetain de la Bibliotheque Nationale, ii, p. 290.

284. Indian Librarian, Sept., 1962, p. 107.

285. Epigraphia Indica, xxi, p. 101.

holding the Prajñāpāramitā manuscripts.[286] Another text in the collection composed in the Mahāvihāra of Somapura was Dharmakāya-dīpa-vidhi rendered into Tibetan by Prjñāśrījñānakīrti. A Tantric monk named Vairocana Rakṣita who used to wander from monastery to monastery, stayed to acquire learning at Nālandā and Vikramaśilā and received instruction from Paṇḍita Śaraṇa called the "head of the assembly of Yogins in the town of Somapura". We had also found that Vīryendra, a native of Samataṭa, i.e. south-east Bengal, made a donation at Bodhgayā and described himself as belonging to Somapura. As a monastic establishment, the fame of the Somapura Mahāvihāra spread far and wide. It was probably rebuilt over a Jaina monastery, as a copper plate dated A.C. 479 recorded a grant of several plotes of land by a Brāhmaṇa couple there for the worship of the Jaina Arhats. The donors were Nāthaśarmā and Rāmī, and Guhanandī was the high priest of the Jaina establishment which was probably situated there.[287]

The Somapura Mahāvihāra "occupying a quadrangle measuring more than 900 feet externally on each side, has high enclosure walls lined on the inside with nearly 177 cells, excluding the cells of the central block in each direction. The wallings, though not preserved to a very great height, envisage, from their thickness and massiveness, a storeyed structure, exactly commensurate with the terraced form of the main temple in the centre of the enclosure".[288] From the ruins at Paharpur it is evident that the Somapura Mahāvihāra was a grand Buddhist establishment.[289] Indeed "no single monastery of such dimensions

286. Bhattacharya, Benoytosh. The Indian Buddhist Iconography, pp. 128-130.

287. Epigraphia Indica, vol. xx, p. 59 ff. (Paharpur copperplate grant of the year 159).

288. Majumdar, R. C. ed. History of Bengal, vol. i, p. 490.

289. Buddhism in Pakistan, by a Pakistani Buddhist (Karachi, Pakistan Publications), pp. 47-48.

has come to light in India and the appellation, Mahāvihāra, 'the great monastery', as designating the place, can be considered entirely appropriate".[290] This monastery had four rows of cells on four sides forming four lines of a rectangle. In the middle portion of each side save the northern one there was a special block that consisted of three cells. A rampart wall ran continuously on all sides on the outer side of the vihāra. But in the inner side of the monastery there was a verandah that too ran continuously on all sides. The monastery could be approached with the help of a staircase leading to the hall measuring 50′×47′, which was renewed at least twice. On entering the inner area through the hall one would come across with a tank meant for washing face and feet at the entrance to the monastery. There were altogether 44 cells on the eastern side of the vihāra.[291] The monks' cells there were generally rectangular in shape without possessing stone beds. There was probably a channel of flowing water. This channel ran along the foundation of the wall on the eastern side where the privies were arranged. Round the wall there were some grouped chambers which might have been intended for the guards and administrative officers. There were also a common kitchen and a dining hall. It was observed that a regular intercourse between the Mahāvihāra of Somapura and that of Nālandā was maintained. Epigraphic evidences testified to this fact.[292] The Tibetan tradition, on the other hand, referred to Devapāla (A.C. 810-850), son and successor of Dharmapāla, as the founder of this mona-

290. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1927-28 p. 106.

291. Dasgupta, Charu Chandra. Paharpur and its monuments, (Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1961), pp. 8-19.

292. Ghosh. Guide to Nalanda, p, 12; Epigraphia Indica, vol. xxi, pp. 97-101.

stery.[293] About the establishment of the Somapura Vihāra Tārānātha wrote : "And King Devapāla. It is even said by some that he was a son of the Nāgas. But (I) think he was born as a descendant of Gopāla··· However, the tradition is like this—'The youngest queen of Gopāla requested a Brāhmaṇa, who was a master of magical charm (mantravidyādhara) for something with which to charm the king and keep him under control (vaśīkaraṇa). The Brāhmaṇa secured some medical herb from the Himālaya, charmed it with magical spell, and said : Mix this with food, seal the food and send it to the king. She sent it through her maid.. After reaching the bank of a river, (the maid) dropped it into the water. It was carried by the water to the Nāga-loka. The Nāga king Sāgarapāla swallowed it and thereby came under the magical charm (of Gopāla's queen). He came in the guise of the king (Gopāla) and united with the queen. When the queen conceived, the king (Gopāla) wanted to punish her. (The queen) told the king that the king himself (i.e. Gopāla) had gone to her on such and such time. Well, said the king, I shall then think over it. When the queen gave birth to a son, the son was found to have the head of a snake and also a ring on his finger. On examination, the ring was found to have a letter in Nāga script. So the king came to know that it was the son of the Nāga king.' After Gopāla's death, he was made the king, became more powerful than the previous kings and brought Varendra under his rule. He wanted to build a special temple and built Somapurī. About it (i.e. the building of Somapurī) most of the Tibetan legends say (the following) : 'The astrologer (lakṣaṇajña) told the king—Prepare a wick with the clothes of śramaṇas and brāhmaṇas, obtain oil from the house of kings and merchants, get a lamp from the hermitage, light it, put it before the tutelar deity (kula

293. Das, S. C. ed. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, i, pp. 111, 116 ; Indian Antiquary, vol. iv, p. 366.

devatā) and pray,—the incarnation of Dharmapāla will then drop it at some place and you build the temple there. By doing this, the king was to be powerful, famed everywhere and would be beneficent to all. All these were done. Then a crow came, took the lamp and threw it into a lake. This made the king extremely worried. At night the five-headed Nāga king appeared before him and said : I am your father. So I shall dry up the lake and you build the temple. Remember to do offerings in big scale for twenty-one days. This was done and within twenty-one days the lake dried up and the temple was built."[294] But the epigraphic records discovered in the ruins of Pāhārpur showed that the Monastery was actually called the "Dharmapāla Mahāvihāra" as it was built by king Dharmapāla. Dr. R. C. Majumdar stated : "The recent archaeological excavations carried out at Paharpur, in Rajshahi district, leave no doubt that its ruins represent the famous Somapura Vihāra, and the name of the place is still preserved in the neighbouring village called Ompur. According to the short inscriptions on some clay seals found in Paharpnr, the Somapura-vihāra was founded by Dharmapāla."[295] Nowhere the name of Devapāla occurred as its founder.[296] K. N. Dikshit rightly observed that this Dharmapāla Monastery was "easily the largest single saṅghārāma that was ever erected in India for Buddhist monks."[297] Perhaps it was inhabited by about 600 to 800 monks. As regards the general plan of it we noticed that "the main portal was towards the north, where a flight of steps leads up to a large pillared

294. Tārānātha. dGos—'dod—Kun—'byuṅ (Beneres, 1964 ed.), pp. 194-195.

295. Majumdar, R. C. ed. History of Bengal, vol. i, p. 115.

296. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1927-28, p. 105. (Śrī-Somapure Śrī-Dharmapāladeva-mahāvihārīya-āryya-bhikṣu-saṅghasya).

297. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 55 (Excavations at Paharpur), p. 18.

hall, open to the north, i.e. on the outside, but enclosed with massive walls on the other three sides, access to a smaller hall in the interior being obtained through a single doorway at the back, i.e., the souh wall. This smaller hall is open to the south, with its roof supported, as in the outer hall, on pillars. This inner hall leads the visitor accross the main verandah to the ruined flight of steps descending to the inner courtyard which stands in front of the main temple. Branching off on left and right from the top of this flight of steps there ran along the inner side of each of the four enclosure walls a single (sometimes double) row of cells (each approximately 13′6″ in length) —all connected by a spacious corridor (approximately 8′ to 9′ wide), running continuously all round, and approached from the inner courtyard by flights of steps provided in the middle of each of the four sides. It should be pointed out in this connection that the monastery, renovated by the monk Vipulaśrīmitra, has been described as a fourfold one, which probably refers to the four lines, of cells along the four sides of the quadrangle. The cells are approached by doorways with an inward splay. The masonry is all laid in ashler courses, but at a certain height the walls, where preserved, show one course of brick-on-edge rivetment to relieve the monotomy of the plain ashlar courses. While the centre of the northern side was occupied by the two entrance-halls noted above, the central block on the other three sides is marked by a projection in the exterior wall and is occupied by a group of three cells, with a passage all round, and the landing stage to the inner courtyard in front. Besides the main gateway to the north, access to the quadrangle might also be had by a subsidiary entrance through the northern enclosure near its eastern end. There was no arrangement for ingress on the southern and western sides, but possibly a small passage in the middle of the eastern block was provided for private entrance. The roof of the corridor seems, as elsewhere, to have been supported on

pillars and there were probably railings fencing off the corridor except the approaches."[298] But it is sad indeed to note that this Monastery which was "a singular feast to the eyes of the world"[299], is now all in ruins. This Vihāra must have existed and functioned over nearly four centuries. It was probably in the hands of Jātavarma who was the first king of the Varman family in East Bengal (Vaṅgāla) and inimical to Buddhism, that the flourishing Monastery of Somapura suffered a death-blow in the 11th century.[300] Jātavarma's troops marched on the Dharmapāla Mahavihara and set fire to it.[301] It is said that Karuṇāśrīmitra, an inmate of the Monastery, disagreed to run away when the conflagration spread around and remained at the feet of the image of Buddha till the flame consumed his mundane body. But even after such a destruction, the Monastery was repaired and restored to some extent.

VĀŚIBHA

Among the other monasteries that were located in ancient Bengal mention may also be made of the Vāśibha-saṅghārāma (Po-śhi-P'o, 'the convent which has the brightness of fire') that was situated, according to Hiuen-tsang, at a distance of about three miles to the west of the capital-city of Puṇḍravardhana. Its towers and pavilions were very lofty. The monastery "had spacious halls and tall storeyed chambers." Its courts were also spacious enough. About 700 monks including many renowned bhikkhus from Eastern India, dwelt here. They followed the Mahāyāna doctrines.[302] But in course of time this Monastery was completely destroyed. The Vihāra had been identified with the ruins of Bhāsuā Vihār near Mahās-

298. Majumdar, R. C. History of Bengal, vol. i, pp. 490-492.

299. Epigraphia Indica, xxi, p, 97.

300. Majumdar, R. C. The History and Culture of the Indian people, vol. V, p. 416. (The Struggle for Empire).

301. Ray, Nihar Ranjan. Bāngālīr Itihāş, p. 519.

302. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, p. 195.

thān (ancient Puṇḍravardhana), where a gigantic mound seemed to be all which remained of that once grand Monastery.[303]

RAKTAVIṬI

Hiuen-tsang also found another famous Buddhist Vihāra named Raktaviṭi (Lo-to-mo-Chi, 'red-mud') or Raktamṛttikā at Karṇasuvarṇa.[304] It had spacious and roomy halls and courts, lofty and storeyed towers and pavilions. All the most distinguished, learned, and celebrated men of the kingdom congregated in this Monastery that was a magnificent and famous establishment. They tried to promote each other's advancement by exhortations, and to perfect their character. It was said that the king of the country, before the entire country was converted to Buddhism, founded this convent for the Buddhist Fraternity in honour of a South Indian Śramaṇa.[305] This Monastery was probably situated at modern Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā (near the Eastern Railway's Chiruti Station, 119 miles from Howrah) in the Murshidabad District.[306] In the vicinity of this famous Buddhist establishment about 500 inscribed terracotta seals and sealings (i.e. impressions made by seals) were recently discovered during excavations organised by Calcutta University's Archaeology Department. The finds were mostly sealings made of clay, sun-dried or over-baked, and dated from about the 5th-6th to the 8th-9th century A. C. The legends inscribed on the sealings mostly related to the official seal of the Bhikṣu-Saṅgha (the community of monks) of Raktamṛttikā. Some sealings had the inscription : "Śrī-Raktamṛttika-

303. Monograph of the Varendra Research Society, No. 2, p. 14.

304. Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra. Bāṅglā deśer itihās (Calcutta, General Printers and Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1373 B. S.), vol. i, pp. x-xi.

305. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, pp. 202-204.

306. The Mahābodhi, vol. 75, Nos. 10-11. (Bose, Satya. The Sealed Fate of Old Murshidabad),

raja-ma (ha) (Vihāra) Ārya-bhikṣu-saṅghasya." Some other sealings inscribed the sacred Buddhist formula : "Ye dhammā hetuppabhāva tesaṃ hetuṃ Tathāgato āha, tesamcha yo nirodha evaṃ vadi mahāsamaṇo." The structural remains of stūpas and shrines and the contents of seal-inscriptions unearthed during the excavations revealed that Rājbāḍidāṅgā like Vaiśālī and Nālandā was also a great Buddhist monastic centre.

VIHĀRAIL

One of the earliest vihāras in Bengal may further be located in Vihārail (Rājshāhī),[307] where trial excavations of a mound called Rājbāḍi (Royal Residence), unearthed the ruins of a structure constructed "on the familiar ancient plan of a row of cells round a central courtyard.[308] The epigraphic materials discovered here, might ascribe a date not later than the Gupta period to the structure.

JAGADDALA

The last glory of Buddhism in ancient Bengal was the magnificent Vihāra of Jagaddala, the creation of Rāmapāla (A. C. 1084-1130),[309] the last great Pāla monarch, who installed therein the images of Avalokiteśvara and Mahat Tārā. The historical epic Rāmacarita[310] spoke of the Jagaddala Mahāvihāra which was situated in the ancient city of Rāmāvatī[311] or Varendrī.[312] The location of the monastery of Jagaddala was not beyond dispute,

307. Majumdar, R. C. History of Bengal, i, p. 489.

308. Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1922-23, p. 108.

309. Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, iii, p. 14.

310. Sastri, H. P. ed, Ramacarita, chaps. 3, 5, 7 ; Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, iii, p.47. (Mandrānaṃ Sthitimudhaṃ Jagaddala-mahāvihāra-cita-rāgaṃ ; Dadhatim lokeśaṃapi mahat-tārodiritoru mahīmānaṃ)

311. Mookerji, R. K. Ancient Indian Education (1951 ed.) p. 595.

312. Majumdar, R. C. ed. The History of Bengal, vol. i (1943), p. 418.

and while Mm. H. P. Shastri placed it in East Bengal and thought that it was located not in Rāmāvatī,[313] Sri N. N. Dasgupta stated that it was situated at the confluence of the Ganges and the Karatoyā.[314] The Tibetan sources had, however, clearly pointed out that this monastery was situated in Orissa, and that it was the place of refuge for a large number of Buddhists and Tantric Siddhas while their monastic strongholds in Bihar and Bengal were sacked and destroyed by the Muslims. It was further observed that, when the monastery of Odantapurī was ravaged by Bakhtyar Khilji in 1202 A. C., its abbot Śakya Śrībhadra who was described as "Kāśmīra-Paiṇḍapātika", took to flight and found shelter in the Jagaddala Vihāra of Orissa. Pandit Rahul Sankrityayana was, however, of opinion that Śākya Śrībhadra became the last hierarch of the University of Vikramaśīlā, and when this institution was destroyed by the Muhammadans he fled away to Jagattāla in East Bengal wherefrom he went to Nepal and Tibet accompanied by Vibhūticandra and Dānaśīla.[315] As already stated, the Monastery was patronised by Rāmapāla of Bengal. Thus it was probably located somewhere in the sphere of influence of this monarch.[316] In the Bengali Caṇḍī of Kavi Kaṅkana Mukundarāma (1577-78 A. C.) it was suggested that Jagaddala was situated towards the south of Triveṇī and Saptagrāma.

The Monastery of Jagaddala was a great centre of Buddhist learning during the late medieval period. It, too, maintained a very good library which was profitably utilized by many teachers, scholars and foreign students alike. Though there was no direct reference to this regard, yet from the names and works of the celebrated

313. Sahitya Parisad Patrika. 1321 B. S. p. 265.

314. Indian Culture, i, p. 232.

315. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, (March, 1937), p. 11.

316. Indian Culture, v, p. 316.

teachers of this University, one can conveniently trace the libraries of Jagaddala, an important stronghold of Buddhist learning.[317] The works composed by the paṇdits of this University were grossly Tantric in character and generally dealt with piśācas, owls, nāgas, yakṣas etc. and their Sādhanās.[318] One special feature of the Jagaddala Monastery was that many locavas (Tibetan scholars) thronged there and transtated sundry Sanskrit books into Tibetan.[319] Mokṣākaragupta of Jagaddala composed in three chapters the Tarkabhāṣā, which testified to the cultivation of Logic in the Mahāvihāra. A Tibetan rendering of his book is found in the Tanjur, ascribed wrongly to one Jñānaśrī, but its original had been discovered in the Jaina Manuscript Library at Pattan with the undernoted colophon : "Finis. Ended is the third chapter on Parārthānumāṇa (Inference for others) in the Tarkabhāṣā composed by the great ascetic (mahā-yati) Śrīmat Bhikṣu Mokṣākaragupta belonging to Rāja-Jagaddala Monastery."[320] The "Royal (Rājā) Jagaddala Monastery" which the author thought to be the name of the establishment was probably the name by which it was then known. Śubhākaragupta had lived here for sometime, during which period he wrote a Tantric commentary. It was at Jagaddala that Dharmākara translated the Saṁvara Vyākhyā of Kṛṣṇa.[321] One of the great scholars of this Monastery was Mahāpaṇḍita Vibhūticandra who was the author of six Sanskrit texts which were translated into Tibetan by by him.[322] Besides, he rendered about eighteen Sanskrit

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317. The Struggle for Empire, ed. by R. C. Majumdar, p. 511.

318. Sankalia, H. D, University of Nalanda, p. 189.

319. Paul, Promode Lal. The Early history of Bengal, ii, p, 30.

320. Iti Śrīmad-Rāja-Jagaddala-vihārīya mahā-yati bhikṣu Mokṣākaragupta-viracitāyāṁ tarkabhāṣāyāṃ parārthānumāṇa-paricchedaḥ samāptaḥ.

321. Cordier, P. Catalogue du fonds Tibetain de la Bibliotheque Nationale, 1915, ii, p. 40.

322. Bose, P. N. Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities, p, 145.

books written by others into Tibetan.[323] Danaśīla, another renowned scholar, won several titles like Paṇḍita, Mahāpaṇḍita, Upādhyāya, and Ācārya for his profound knowledge. He translated into Tibetan as many as fifty-four texts which exercised great influence on Tibetan Buddhism. In a glorified description of Varendrī, Rāmapāla's kingdom, the court-poet Sandhyākara Nandī in the Canto III (verse 7) of his celebrated poem entitled "Rāmacaritam" mentioned the great Jagaddala Monastery in the following manner : "(Varendrī)—which had elephants of the mandra type imported (into its forests)—where, in the 'great monastery' (mahāvihāra) of Jagaddala, kindly love for all was found accumulated—which country bore (in its heart) the image of (Bodhisattva) Lokeśa—and whose great glory was still more increased (or pronounced) by the (the presence of) the great (heads of monasteries) and (image of) Tārā (the Buddhist goddess)."[324] But it is painful to note that this famous "Royal (Rājā) Jagaddala Monastery" could hardly survive for a century and during the Turuṣka conquest in 1203 it was completely destroyed and passed into oblivion.[325] In the Tibetan legend an account of the closing period of this great monastery was found in connection with Śākya Śrībhadra, a Kashmirian monk, who came all the way from far-off Kashmir to visit the existing seats of learning in Magadha. Unfortunately enough, as he noticed both Odantapurī and Vikramaśilā destroyed, he went direct to Jagaddala Monastery which was still an attractive centre.[326] In this Mahāvihāra he found asylum for only three years.

323. Das, S. K. Educational system of ancient Hindus, p. 383.

324. Mandrāṇāṃ sthitimudhāṃ Jagaddala-mahāvihāra-cita-rāgam ; Dadhatiṃ lokeśamapi mahat-tārodiritoru-mahīmānaṃ.

325. Das, Santosh Kr. Educational system of the ancient Hindus, p. 383.

326. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1896, p. 25. (A Note on the Antiquity of Chittagong.)

The destruction that had already been experienced by the two earlier monasteries was also knocking the doors of Jagaddala. Śākya Śrībhadra, however, during his short stay at Jagaddala met here Śubhākargupta, a spiritual guide, who was both a scholar and a saint.

VIKRAMAPURĪ

The Vihāra of Vikramapurī which, according to the Tibetan Bstan-hgyur, was situated in Bengal that lay to the east of Magadha,[327] appeared from the coincidence of names to have been located in Vikramapur a of East Bengal (Dacca district).[328] Sri N. N. Dasgupta had connected its origin with Dharmapāla, the celebrated emperor of Bengal.[329] It was in the Vikrampurī Vihāra which was also a great centre of learning in Eastern India, that Kumāracandra, called Ācārya Avadhūta, wrote a Tantric commentary, which was done into Tibetan by Līlāvajra of India and Puṇyadhvaja of Tibet.[330] It is improbable that Līlāvajra who was a disciple of the princess Lakṣīmkara, daughter of Indrabhūti of Uḍḍiyāna, should be given a higher antiquity than Dharmapāla himself. Although today we get neither a concrete collection of manuscripts nor any literary reference to that effect yet all the circumstantial evidences, to some extent, help us to think of an exquisite collection of literary performances in this Monastery which flourished probably under the patronage of the Candras and Senas.[331]

ŚĀLAVANA

There is yet enough scope of study and research as

327. Cordier. Vihāra de Vikramapuri du Bengale dans le Magadha oriental, ii, pp. 159-160.

328. Paul, P. L. The Early history of Bengal, p. 30 ; Dey, N. L. The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India, p. 19.

329. Bhāratvarṣa, 1341, B.S. pp. 962-970.

330. Cordier, P. Catalogue du fonds Tibetain de la Bibliotheque Nationale, 1915.

331. Indian Culture, i,1935, p. 230 (Das Gupta, N. N. The Buddhist Vihāras of Bengal) ; Ray, Niharranjan. Bāngālir Itihās, p. 633.

regards the Śālvana Vihāra (Monastery) which was probably situated somewhere on the Lālmāi-Maynāmatī mountain range in the Comilla district of East Pakistan. Recent archaeological excavations under the auspices of the Government of Pakistan had proved the existence of a Buddhist monastery there. It was said that this Monastery was erected by the Deva rulers of Bengal in the seventh or eighth century of the Christian era. Dr. F. A. Khan, Director of the Archaeological Department, Pakistan[332] thought that under the patronage of the Buddhist kings this Śālavana Monastery was in great pomp and splendour at least for four centuries and became a seat of learning like ancient Takṣaśīlā and Nālandā Universities. Since its excavation, about one hundred and fifteen cells which were the abodes of monks, had been found out. Other archaeological findings helped us to ascertain that for the constant use of the boarders there was a rich collection of books in the Śālavana Monastery. During its golden period, monk-students and teachers made good use of this collection which may technically be called today a library.

GUNAIGHAR

There also existed a great Buddhist establishmeet at a village named, Gunaighar (Guṇikāgrahāra of the inscription) near Comilla in the district of Tippera in East Bengal as an inscription dated the year 188 (507-508 A.C.) of Vainya Gupta on a copper-plate had been discovered here.[333] This epigraphic record noted the gift of plots of land in a village in Uttaramaṇḍala, apparently a province ruled by a Governor, Mahārājā who was described as a "pādadāsa" or a vassal of Mahārājā Vainya Gupta. At the request of Rudradatta the royal gift was made in the form of an agrahāra in absolute possession (sarvato bhogena). It was made in favour of the Avaivarttika

332. Desh, No. 15, 1369 B. S., p. 195.

333. Indian Historical Quarterly, vi, (1930), pp. 55 ff.

Saṅgha of Mahāyāna Buddhist monks (Śākyabhikṣu), which was originally established by the great Mahāyāna teacher Ācārya Śāntideva and housed in a monastery called ĀŚRAMA VIHĀRA that was consecrated to Ārya-Avalokiteśvara and had been established by one Rudradatta. This monastery was evidently an earlier establishment in that locality. The inscription recorded that an earlier gift was made by the same Rudradatta to provide the Saṅgha with its necessaries in the shape of clothing (cīvara), food (piṇḍapāta), beds (śayana), seats (āsana) and medicine for the sick and the like and also the means of its maintenance by repairing all breaches (khaṇḍa) and cracks (phuṭṭa) in the monastery.

PAṬṬIKERAKA

Buddhism flourished as a religion in ancient Paṭṭikeraka or Paṭṭikerā which from the eleventh century onward became the metropolis of that portion of East Bengal which lay to the east of the Brahmaputra.[334] A miniature label below the painting of a goddess with 16 arms in a Nepalese manuscript, copied in A.C. 1015, also mentioned the city of Paṭṭikeraka as : "Paṭṭikere Cundāvarabhavana Cundā."[335] Extensive ruins of a great Buddhist monastery had been unearthed on the Maiṇāmatī Hill, in Tippera. The entire hill was infested with mounds of different sizes. These had been grouped under 18 main classes of which Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 10 had been examined so far. Obviously the Mound No. 5 was the largest among them. About its plan one could remark that it very much resembled "the Paharpur Monastery, and though it was not probably so nicely decorated, it must have vied with Paharpur in richness, exuberance and colour."[336] This Vihāra

334. Indian Historical Quarterly, ix. 282.

335. Majumdar, R. C. Bāṅlā deśer itihās (1373 B.S.), vol. i, p. 113.

336. Buddhism in Pakistan, by a Pakistani Buddhist (Pakistan Publications), p. 52.

which was mentioned in an inscription, discovered on this hill and dedicated to Durgottārā, of a king named Harikāladeva Raṇavaṅkamalla Śrī-Harikāladeva of Paṭṭikeraka (A.C. 1220) was situated at this city.[337]

We found that KANAKASTŪPA VIHĀRA also was located in Paṭṭikeraka. It was said that Ācārya Vinayaśrīmitra and some other Kashmiri bhikkhus dwelt in that monastery. Some scholars are inclined to identify the Kanakastūpa Vihāra with the monastery of Paṭṭikera mentioned above. But we are not definite about such identification at the present stage of our knowledge.[338] Yaśobhadra, a Kashmiri Buddhist monk, used to dwell in this monastery while he was writing his treatise entitled "Vajrapadasārasaṁgraha-pañjikā."[339]

CHITTAGONG

The Paṇḍita-Vihāra[340] of ancient Chittagong with its brilliant temple within was famous and distinguished as a centre of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially Tantric learning and culture. At this Vihāra the Brahmanical disputants used to challange the Buddhists to meet them in religious controversies. The Monastery was also associated with the origin of Panshva rtse rīñ (the pointed conical cap worn by the lāmās of Tibet, during religious service).[341] Tailapāda, the great Tantric teacher of Nāḍapāda, used to reside there.

TĀMRALIPTA

Fa-Hien also found twenty-two monasteries, all with resident monks in the country of Tāmralipta[342] (variant Tāmralipti) which was the same as Tamluk in the

337. Indian Historical Quarterly, ix, pp. 282 ff.

338. Dasgupta, Nalininath. Bāṅglāy Bouddhadharma (Calcutta, A. Mukherjee & Co., 1355 B.S.), p. 215.

339. Dasgupta, Nalininath. Bāṅglāy Bouddhadharma (A. Mukherjee & Co., 1355 B.S.), p. 164.

340. Majumdar, R. C. Bāṅglā deśer itihās, p. 150.

341. Das, S.C. ed. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, pt. i. p, 109.

342. Legge, J. A Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, p. 100.

Midnapur district of West Bengal, about twelve miles from the confluence of the Rūpnārāyaṇa and the Hooghly. The Chinese Pilgrim described Tāmralipta, a seaport, as being situated on the seaside, fifty yojanas east from Campā.[343] He was so much fascinated with the rich monastic libraries of Tāmralipta that he stayed there for two years copying out Sūtras[344] and drawing pictures of Buddhist images.[345] In the 7th century A.C. when Hiuen-tsang visited the place, Buddhism had already undergone a setback and the pilgrim could count there more than 50 deva-temples while the number of Buddhist saṅghārāmas by that period was ten, only half as many as seen by Fa-hien. But inspite of this visible decline, Buddhism still retained a popular appeal in that place and the number of monks was reported to be not less than 1,000 in different monasteries of Tāmralipta.[346] Large number of terracotta figures, and various objects of antiquarian interest, had been found from the surface of this place, revealing its importance as a commercial and religious centre in the past, and it is hoped that the organised archaeological excavations at this site in future will throw a good deal of light on the history and culture of this region. We find that Ta-Ch'ieng-teng stayed at Tāmralipta for twelve years and acquired an extensive knowledge of Sanskrit Buddhist texts. On his return to China he explained the Nidānaśāstra of Ullaṅga. Tao-lin also resided there for three years, learnt Sanskrit and got himself initiated to the Sarvāstivāda School.[347] Tāmralipta continued to be a great Buddhist centre as late as

343. Cunningham, A. Ancient Geography of India, p. 732.

344. Perhaps 'Sūtra' (Chinese Ching) is used in Fa-Hien's Travels for any portion of the Tripiṭaka which he had obtained.

345. Giles. The Travels of Fa-hsien, p. 66.

346. Beal, S. Buddhist Record of the Western World, vol. ii, p, 200.

347. Chavannes, E. Compośe a l'epodue de la grande dynastie T'ang sur les Religieux Eminents dui allerent chercher la loi dans les pays d'occident, par I-tsing ("Memoir on the Chinese pilgrims who went in search of Law to the Western Countries, by I-tsing, Paris 1894), p. 94.

the time of I-tsing (673-87 A.C.) who spoke eloquently of the fame and grandeur of a celebrated canvent called PO-LO-HO (BHA-RA-HA)[348] MONASTERY of this place ;[349] he stayed there for some time, learnt Sanskrit and the Śabdavidyā, and rendered at least one Sanskrit text entitled "Nāgārjuna-bodhisattva-suhṛllekha" into Chinese. The only building, of any archaeological interest, that now exists in the site is the temple of Bargā-Bhīma, which was evidently an ancient Vihāra, "transformed not earlier than the 14th century, into a dome-topped Hindu temple of the Orissa style by an outward coating of bricks and plaster after the expulsion of Buddhism."[350] It was said that this monasetry was inhabited by both monks and nuns with perfect discipline of life and conduct. The lands of the monastery were cultivated by the lay-tenants and the priests used to receive only a portion of the product. Thus they led their pure life, avoiding worldly affairs and being free from the faults of destroying lives by ploughing and watering fields. The business of the Vihāra was carried on by the assembly of monks and the priests challenging the decision of the assembly were liable to be expelled from the monastery and treated like householders. Monastic rules and rites were explained by the learned monks to all inmates of the monastery on the four Uposatha days of every month. The junior monks were generally kept under strict discipline and the learned monks who mastered the Piṭakas were provided with the best rooms and servants. Such monks were entrusted with the work of delivering lectures daily and exempted from the usual duties of an ordinary priest. Strange priests who used to arrive at the monastery were treated by the assembly with the best food for five days, during which

348. Varāha or Barahat ?

349. Sahu, N. K. Buddhism in Orissa (1958 ed.), pp. 83-84,

350. Dey, N. L. (The) Geographical dictionery of ancient and medieval India, p. 203.

he was allowed to take rest from fatigue. But after these days he was treated as a common monk. If he was a man of good character, the assembly would request him to dwell with them and supply him with bed-gear as suited to his rank. Then his name was written down on the register of the names of the resident priests. After it he became just the same as the old residents. Whenever a layman would come there with a good inclination, his motive would thoroughly be inquired into and if he would express his intention to become a priest, he would first be shaved. Thenceforth his name would have no concern with the register of the state; for there was a register-book of the assembly. If he afterwards would violate the laws and fail in his religious performances, he would be expelled from the monastery without sounding the bell. The nuns, however, were living under more severe regulations and they were never allowed to walk alone outside the monastery. They were to walk in a company of two, and if they had to go to any layman's house they were to go in a company of four. Laywomen visiting the monastery were not permitted to go to the apartments of the priests and they were to talk with them at the corridor. I-tsing appreciated much the conduct of a bhikṣu named Rāhulamitra[351] who dwelt in that monastery and who had never spoken with any women face to face except his mother and sister. He was, therefore, the model of all the monks in that respect. Being asked for such a behaviour he replied: "I am naturally full of worldly attachment, and without doing thus, I cannot stop its source. Although we are not prohibited (to speak with women) by the Holy One, it may be right (to keep them off), if it is meant to prevent our evil desires."[352] Such an institution, based

351. Rāhulamitra may be Rāhulaka whose verses are compiled in the Subhāsitavalī of Vallabhadeva and the Śārngadharapaddhati.

352. I-tsing. A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago; trans. by J. Takakusu (Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966 ed.), p. 64.

strictly on discipline and morality in the 8th century A.C. when Tantric culture was strongly prevailing in the whole of Eastern India, demanded admiration from all.

PUṢPAGIRI

In ancient Orissa, the homeland of later Buddhism, there were several monasteries. Hiuen-tsang in the seventh century, had the opportunity to know about hundred saṅghārāmas, with 10,000 bhikkhus who followed the Mahāyāna ideals there. In the south-west of the country was the PUṢPAGIRI MONASTERY (PU-SE-PO-KI-LI) on a mountain. The stone stūpa of this monastic abode used to exhibit supernatural lights and other miracles.[353] On fast-days it emitted a bright light. So the lay-devotees from far and near flocked together here and presented as offerings beautifully embroidered canopies; they placed these underneath the vase at the top of the cupola. To the north-west of this Vihāra, in a convent on the mountain, was a Stūpa where the same wonders occurred as in the former case.[354] As regards the location of the Puṣpagiri Monastery we can conclude that on a mountain in the south-west of the country will lie the Udayagiri or the Nalatigiri, for both these hills are to the south-west of Jajpur, and the Ratnagiri is to the south."[355]

RATNAGIRI

The RATNAGIRI MONASTERY[356] which was situated about forty miles (Lat. 20°38'n., Long. 86°20'e) to the north-east of Cuttack, from where it was approachable by the Patamundai canal embankment, became one of

353. Watters. On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, vol. ii, pp. 193-194.

354. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, p. 205.

355. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 44, p. 6. (Chanda, Ramaprasad. Exploration of Orissa).

356. O'malley. Cuttack District Gazetteer (1906), p. 206; Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 44.

the most important Buddhist centres of learning playing a great role in disseminating the Buddhist culture and religion not only in India but also in the Buddhist world outside. With its nucleus dating from about the 5th century or earlier, the establishment witnessed a phenomenal growth in Buddhist religion, art and architecture, particularly during the reign of the Bhaumakaras. The Ratnagiri inscription in Gupta characters and the Bodhisattva images of the Gupta style at Jajpur and on the Ratnagiri indicated that there were Buddhistic establishments on one or more of these hills in the seventh century A. C.[357] The ruins of the big stūpa, the pradakṣiṇa (circumbulation)-path which was enclosed by four walls forming a square are still traceable on the hill. This religious centre, designated as the Mahāvihāra of Ratnagiri where eager students and scholars flocked to study with many intellectual stalwarts of Buddhism and which endeavoured to sustain the dying flame of the faith, was all but forgotten, either in records or in tradition, in India itself; only a faint memory lingered in the late Tibetan work Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang and in the writings of the Tibetan historian Lāmā Tāranātha of the 17th century. In the former, we were simply told that the famous teachers Bodhiśrī, Nāropā and others were engaged in Tantric practices on this hill.[358] Tāranātha was slightly more communicative when he said that towards the end of the reign of King Buddhapakṣa, a monastery called Ratnagiri was built in the Kingdom of Oḍivisa (modern Orissa) on the crest of a hill lying near the sea and that in this Vihāra were kept three sets of the Mahāyāna, Hīnayāna and other śāstras, and there were eight great groups of the Dharma and five hundred monks. He further told us that Āchārya Pito, who had his training at

357. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 44, p. 6.

358. Das, Sarat Chandra. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, pt. i, p. 115; Misra, B. Orissa under the Bhauma kings, pp. 89-93.

Saṁbhala and had acquired the siddhi of invisibility, was a renowned teacher of yoga at Ratnagiri, where Avadhūtī, Bodhiśrī and Nāropā were his chief disciples. Yuan-Chao in his "Catalogue of the new translations made during the period Cheng-Yuan"[359] presented the life of an aspirant scholar named Prājña, a contemporary of him, who studied Yoga in a monastic institution of Orissa. He stated : "Prājña was born in Kapisā, on the western verge of the Indian world, had commenced his studies in Northern India, had thus passed eighteen years in learning; afterwards he had settled in 'the monastery of the King of Wu Ch'a (Uḍa, Orissa) of Southern India' to study Yoga." We also knew from him that Prājña next moved to China, and made his debut there in 788 by a translation of the "(Mahāyānabodhi)—Śat-Pāramitā-Sūtra-"[360] The monastery of the King of Wu Ch'a, appeared to be the Mahāvihāra of Ratnagiri, where famous institutions for the study of Yoga Philosophy flourished in ancient times and the great importance of the monastery was evident from the fact that Prājña had to study there after completing eighteen years of his learning in different institutions of India including the University of Nālandā. It was further known that in 795 A.C.,[361] the Chinese emperor Te-tsong received as a token of homage an autographed manuscript addressed to him by the Buddhist King of the realm Wu Ch'a, whose name was "the fortunate monarch who does what is pure, the lion." The manuscript presented to the Chinese emperor was the last section of, the Avataṃśaka, known as the Gaṇḍavyūha, and the emperor had requested the monk Prājña to supply the translation of the text, as well as, of the accompanying letter from the King of Wu Ch'a. Thus, it appeared clear that Prājña, who was studying

359. Cheng-Yuan Sin ting Shet kia mou lou, C. xvii, Tokyo, xxxviii, 7a, 71, 8b,

360. Epigraphia Indica, xv, p. 364.

361. The eleventh year of the period Cheng-Yuan, which extends from 785 to 805 A.C.

in the monastery of Ratnagiri, was sent as a cultural ambassador to the Court of the Chinese emperor Te-tsong by the King of Wu Ch'a whose name, as known from the Chinese translation was Śubhakara Siṃha, identified with Subhākara I (790 A. C.) of the Bhaumakara dynasty.

At Ratnagiri the main stūpa which was a brick stūpa, bore no definite evidence of the date of its construction; but it was certainly earlier than the 8th century which saw the construction of an inscribed votive stūpa at a level, 1 ft. 10 in. higher than the floor-level of the former. This Stūpa was built directly over the ruins of an earlier brick structure which might have also been a Stūpa, going back to circa 5th century. At any rate, the existence of the Buddhist edifices of this period near this very spot was attested by the discovery of two stone slabs inscribed with the text of the Buddhist Pratītyasamutpādasūtra in Gupta characters. In accordance with the practice prevalent in Gupta times, as evidenced at Nālandā, Kāsia and Gopālpur, of enshrining this particular text inside stūpas, at Ratnagiri too these slabs inscribed in Gupta characters must have been placed inside contemporary stūpas; subsequently with the decay of those structures, they were thrown out and mixed up with the debris.[362]

VIRAJĀ

Under the patronage of the Bhaumakara Kings large number of religious institutions developed in many parts of Orissa and more particularly the city of Virajā, modern Jājpura, and its environs were adorned with famous monasteries and sanctuaries the remains of which may be traced even now. The Dheṅkānāl Plate of Tribhuvana Mahādevī, whose husband Śivakara III (884 A. C.) was a devout worshipper of Buddha, highly eulogised the activities of his preceding rulers "who exhausted treasures

362. The Indo-Asian Culture, vol. ix, no. 2, Oct., 1960, pp. 160-175. (Mitra, Debala. Ratnagiri).

of their vast empire on religious works in order to enlighten their country and others who decorated the earth by constructing in unbroken continuity various maṭhas, monasteries and sanctuaries, which were like the staircases to ascend to the city of Purandara."[363] We know from the Nepalese sources that Padmaprabha had his enlightenment at Virajā.[364] The DHARMAŚĀLĀ area located in the south of the Āsia hills, near Virajā, was also a great centre of Mahāyāna Buddhism in those ancient days. Likewise the old village of Gaṇḍivedha which was probably so named after the well-known Mahāyānic text entitled Gaṇḍavyūha was also a Buddhist monastic centre as Buddhist antiquities had been found out abudantly there. At KHAḌIPADĀ, only six miles to the north-west of Jājpura, another great site of Buddhism might also be traced, which was the find-spot of a number of Bodhisattva images dated 8th to 9th century A.C. and kept now at the Orissa Museum, Bhuvaneśvara. The ruined mounds at Khaḍipadā still bear traces of an old monastic establishment which flourished there during the reign of the Bhaumakaras. An inscribed image of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara found at that place showed that the image had been installed in the monastery by Mahāmaṇḍalācārya Parama Guru Rāhularuci during the rule of the King Śubhākaradeva.[365] Extensive ruins of a Buddhist monastery and a great Buddhist temple which had enshrined an image of Buddha of a gigantic size were discovered at KUPĀRI, close to Balasore.[366] This Kupāri (Komparaka grāmo) was undoubtedly a very favourite place of the Buddhists in Uttar Tosāli and the Neulpur Plate of King Śubhākaradeva I mentioned it along with the hill which

363. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, vol. ii, pp. 419-27 ; Misra, B. Orissa under the Bhauma Kings, p. 28.

364. Mitra, R. L. The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal, p. 204

365, Epigraphia Indica, vol. xxvi, p. 147 ff.

366, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1871, pt. 1, no. 111 (Beams, John The Ruins of Kupāri).

stood close to it. Many Buddhist monks used to live in this monastery that prospered in the 8th century A.C. and residential caves might even now be found on the hill together with the remains of the old monastery at the neighbourhood of it. Thus it is evident that the city of Virajā and its environ being a glorious seat of Buddhism accommodated many monasteries, convents, stūpas and sanctuaries dated 8th to 9th century A.C.

TOSAL

Tosalī became important centre of Buddhism since the period of Aśoka, the Great Maurya, and continued to be so for several centuries thereafter. The excavation at Śiśupālgarh near Bhuvaneśvara had brought to light the remains of a great and well-planned city with elaborate gateways, lofty watch-towers and strong defensive walls. A great number of antiquities discovered there revealed the continuous existence of this city from the 3rd century B. C. to the 4th century A.C.[367] In view of the location of this site in close neighbourhood of Dhauli, the distance between the two being about three miles in a straight line, it may be identified with the historic city Tosalī that played a very conspicuous role in the cultural history of Ancient India. The Gaṇḍavyūha, a Sanskrit Buddhist text of the 3rd century A. C., which formed the last part of the vast collection of the Avataṁsaka and was translated into Chinese for the first time under the supervision of Buddhabhadra between 398 and 421 A.C.,[368] recorded a vivid description of the city of Tosalī. According to this text it was the chief city of the country named Amita Toṣala and Upāsikā Acalāsthirā instructed Sudhana, a favourite disciple of Mañjuśrī as follows: "Now young man, go on your way: in this Dekkhan where we are,

367. Sahu, N. K. Buddhism in Orissa (1958 ed.), pp. 81-82.

368. Mitra, Rājendra Lal. The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal, p. 90.

there is the country of Amita Toṣala; in that country there is a city called Toṣala; there dwells a wandering monk of the name of Sarvagāmin." The text further related: "He, therefore, went away to this country of Amita Toṣala to search for the city of Toṣala and he reached the city of Toṣala by stages. At the time of sunset he entered the city of Toṣala; he stopped in the middle of the square, and then wandered from lane to lane, from place to place and from cart-road to cart-road; at last he found Sarvagāmin and when the night was drawing to its end, he perceived to the north of the city of Toṣala the mountain called Surabha of which the summit was covered with lawns, bowers of tree, plants, groves and gardens."[369] The description in this text evidently proved the existence of a lovely monastic establishment on the Surabha hill with which the sage Sarvagāmin was associated, and which was also a renowned centre of Buddhist yoga. The SURABHAGIRI may be identified either with the Dhauli or with one of its adjoining hills. The remains of the foundations of ancient rock-monasteries and caves found now in these hillocks obviously showed that place was once a very important centre of Buddhism in Orissa. The Nāgārjunikoṇḍa Inscription referred to the monks belong to the Thearvāda School in Tosalī, while the Gaṇḍavyūha being a Mahāyānic work naturally attached the Mahāyānic importance to the place. Thus it was evident that the establishments of both the Schools of Buddhism were flourishing side by side in Tosalī during the the 3rd century A.C.

An inscription inscribed in one of the lofty hill situated in front of the Aśokan edict at Dhauli showed that there was a monastery called ARGHYAKĀ VARĀṬIKĀ in the 9th century A.C.[370] This inscription recorded that the monastery was constructed in 829 A.C. (year 93),

369. Bagchi. Pre-Āryan and Pre-Drāvidian in India, pp. 70, 176.

370. Epigraphia Indica, xix, pp. 263-264.

during the reign of the Bhaumakara ruler Śrī Śāntikaradeva by Bhīmaṭa and Bhaṭṭa Loyāmaka. It is said that Bhīmaṭa was the son of a famous physician called Nannaṭa by his wife Ījjyā, whereas Bhaṭṭa Loyāmaka was the grandson of Nannaṭa, and they both were the inhabitants of Virajā (Jājpura) which was a flourishing seat of Buddhism during their time. The same Bhīmaṭa caused another inscription to be incised inside the Ganeṣagumphā of the Udayagiri hill, five miles to the west of Bhuvaneśvara. This inscription revealed that almost all the caves of the Kumārī hill (Udayagiri) had been inhabited by the Buddhist monks by the end of the 8th century A. C.[371]

Another monastery was situated in Northern Toṣala in a flourishing condition during the middle of the 9th century A. C. It was in this monastery that Śsvakaradeva III at the request of the Rāṇaka Śrī Vinītatuṅga executed a Copper Plate Grant in the year 149—885 A.C. donating the revenue of the village Buddhabhaṭṭāraka.[372] This Plate was discovered in a small village named Jagati near Talcher and we may locate the above monastic establishment in the find-spot of it. The sanctuary of Buddhabhaṭṭāraka, enshrining the image of the Lord Buddhabhaṭṭāraka, was built by Amubhaṭṭāraka probably within the precinct of the JAYĀŚRAMA VIHĀRA, where both monks and nuns were residing together, and the Plate related that ten attendants were appointed there to look after the comforts of nuns only. A portion of expenditure of this monastery was met through the revenue of the village Kallaṇī (in the Pūrvarāṣtra Viṣaya), which included taxes on weavers, cowherds and the sauṇḍikas (wine-sellers) as well as the income from the ferries, fallow lands (ītara sthānādi), and forests. This revenue was divided into three parts which were allotted (a) for perpetual offering of ablution,

371. Epigraphia Indica, xiii, p. 167.

372. Misra, B. Orissa under the Bhauma kings, p. 40 ff.

sandal paste, flowers, incense, lamp, vali, caru, and oblation to the Lord Buddhabhaṭṭāraka, for paying the servants, as well as, for supplying the ten attendants of the nuns with garments, oblation pots, bedsteads, and medicines, (b) for the repair of dilapidation, and (c) for the maintenance of the family of the donor.

DANTAPURA

Dantapura, the ancient capital of Kaliṅga, which has been identified with Purī in Orissa, was from the very inception a stronghold of Buddhism. It is believed that "in the uncertain dawn of Indian tradition, the highly spiritual doctrines of Buddha obtained shelter here; and the Golden Tooth of the founder remained for centuries at Purī, then the Jerusalem of the Buddhists, as it has for centuries been of the Hindus."[373] According to the Dāṭhāvaṃsa, the tooth was taken from the funeral pile of Buddha by Khema, one of his disciples, who gave it to Brahmadatta, and was kept and worshipped in a temple at Dantapura for many generations. The tooth was taken to Pātaliputra in the fourth century A.C., by Guhaśiva, king of Kaliṅga. It was brought back to Dantapura by king Guhaśiva and placed in its old temple. After the death of Guhaśiva in a battle with the nephews of Khiradhāra, a northern king, who had attacked Dantapura for plundering the tooth, it was removed to Ceylon by his daughter Hemamālā and her husband Dantakumāra, a prince of Ujjain and sister's son of Guhaśiva, in the reign of Kīrttiśrī Meghavarṇa (A.C. 298-326) who preserved the relic at Anurādhāpura. The episode of the tooth-relic shows that there was probably a great monastery in the vicinity of the spot where Buddha's tooth was deposited. Another ancient name of the modern town of Purī where lies the temple of Jagannātha was Caritrapura

373. Sahu, N. K. ed. A History of Orissa, vol. i (Calcutta, Susil Gupta Ltd., 1956), p. 5.

(Che-li-tā-lo).[374] Hiuen-tsang found that this city situating to the south-east of the Wu-tu country grew up as a remarkable seat of Mahāyāna Buddhism. He further noticed that it was surrounded by strong and lofty walls outside of which existed five great Buddhist convents with many storeyed towers. These convents became full of life and beauty and each of them was adorned with artistic carvings of Buddha and Bodhisattva images. Apart from its religious significance Che-li-tā-lo or Caritrapura was also a famous emporium of trade being "a thoroughfare and resting-place for sea-going traders and strangers from distant lands."[375] The Chinese Pilgrim became much impressed by the romantic sea-scape of this port and standing on the shore in clear starlit night he floated his thought on the liquid horizon of the sea, beyond which he could perceive at a great distance the glittering rays of the precious gem placed on the top of the Stūpa of the Tooth of Buddha.

BHORAŚAILA

The Buddhist monastery of Bhoraśaila which was the abode of the great dialectician Dignāga developed by the 4th century A.C. in Orissā.[376] At this vihāra the idealistic logic of Buddhism was systematised by this illustrious savant and his disciples who propagated the mystic philosophy of Mahāyāna and the Sāṅkhya philosopher Iśvarakṛṣṇa defined Dignāga and was decisively defeated by him in a series of metaphysical discussions. From the village Delāṅg which was believed to have been named after Ācārya Dignāga, upto the vicinity of Bhuvaneśvara there were found some low hills, the notable among which were the Vindhyeśvarī, Sāañlā, Pāañrā, Baṇivakreśvara, Jamunājhāḍapaḍā, Arāgaḍa and Dhaulī. These hills became full of caves which were inhabited by the Buddhist

374. Cunningham, A. Ancient Geography of India, p. 510,

375. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, p. 194.

376. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, p. 212.

monks upto even the late mediaeval period. The Bhoraśaila may be identified with some one of this group of hills.[377]

MUÑJASHI

It was known from the Tibetan sources that Muñjashi was a famous sanctuary in Orissa being a centre of Buddhist learning, frequented by the celebrated teachers during early days.[378] This sanctuary was founded by one of the early kings of Orissa, called Muñjashi, who was converted to Buddhism, and hence it was so named after him. We know that there was a king of Orissa, who was called Muñja and who became converted to Buddhism by Nāgārjuna. It may be that Muñja was actually the founder of this famous monastic establishment. During the reign of king Mahīpāla (circa 988—1036 A.C.) this sanctuary of Muñjashi was a flourishing stronghold of Buddhism and was then visited by the great Tantric scholar Ānandagarbha, the preceptor of Mahīpāla. It was said that Vīrācārya, the then ruler of Orissa, paid great honour to Ānandagarbha who presented to the king a Buddhist work called in Tibetan Pāl-chog-deng-po (The First Noble Supreme One).[379] But it is a matter of great regret that details about this sanctuary are still wanting and no conclusion has been arrived at regarding its actual location.

The details of the Buddhist monasteries of Central and Eastern India, record a romantic phase of the evolution of vihāras in Ancient India. Among other monasteries which were located in these areas mention may be made of SUVARṆA VIHĀRA near Krishnagar in the Nadia district, ŚĪLABHADRA MONASTERY in the vicinity of the Barabar Hills, RĀJA VIHĀRA and JINASENA VIHĀRA in Comilla, ŚĪLĀVARṢA VIHĀRA of Bogura, HALUDA VIHĀRA of Dīpagañja which was situated at

377. Sahu, N. K. Buddhism in Orissa (1958 ed.), pp. 82-83.

378. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. iii (New Series), 1907, p. 223.

379. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, p. 115.

a distance of 28 miles south-west of Paharpur in Bengal and BHOJAKAGIRI VIHĀRA that became a centre of Sthavīra School in Orissa. We have seen that here the monasteries which passed through their adolescent period played also a vital role in the educational life of the Indians being the celebrated centres of Buddhist learning and culture. From simple resorts for the monks, these vihāras here often ultimately came to be transformed into important centres of learning, something in the form of modern residential universities.[380] The monasteries of Jetavana, Nālandā, Vikramaśīlā, Odantapurī, Somapura, Jagaddala and many others may surely boast of their monk-scholars and organised mode of life.[381] Although more information about these vihāras are of prime necessity, yet from what we still find it may be said that the Central and Eastern Indian brick-built Buddhist monasteries, with a singular exception of the Guhā-Vihāra at Bāgh, really showed a step forward and may easily be compared with the Christian monasteries of the western countries.[382] They represented the embryonic as well as the shaping stages of the Buddhist Vihāras in India. But it is a matter of great lamentation that due to natural calamities and ruthless devastation caused by the non-Buddhists all these monasteries are now in crumbling ruins.

380. Majumdar, R. C. ed. History of Bengal, vol. i, p. 489.

381. I am indebted to Sm. Dipa Chaudhuri B.A., B.Lib.Sc. for assisting me in the work of compilation of particulars about these Buddhist monasteries of Ancient India.

382. Sen, A. C. Buddhist remains in India (New Delhi, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1956), pp. 20-23.

Chapter Five

VIHĀRAS IN SOUTHERN INDIA

Monasteries as the abodes for the Buddhist monks and nuns were also built in abundance in Southern India.[1] These monastic establishments which were founded mostly on the Deccan plateau represented the classical phase of Buddhist monasticism. With a long tradition of a congregated life the people of this part of the country did their best to erect and preserve the monasteries along with their excellent collections of valuable manuscripts. The South Indian monasteries, thus, being of a much later date than some of those of Northern and Central India became maturer in age and physical make-up and there lies little doubt, today, as to their magnificence and importance. They being liberally patronised by the kings of South India, played a vital role in the cultural and

1. The Chinese source which we have accepted here to narrate the geographical limit described Southern India (Dakṣiṇāpatha) as comprising the whole of the Peninsula after Nasik on the west and Ganjam on the east, to Cape Kumārī (Comorin) on the south, including the modern districts of Berār and Telingānā, Mahārāṣṭra and the Konkon, with the separate states of Hyderabad, Mysore, and Travancore, or very nearly the whole of the Peninsula to the south of the Narmadā and the Mahānadī rivers (Majumdar, S. N. ed. Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, p. 14).

educational spheres. As a consequence these vihāras gradually turned into educational institutions. The extant ruins still testify to their glorious past. Thus with architectural magnificence, sculptural beauty, regulated monastic life and eminent scholars, these South Indian monasteries held a superior position even in the past. In many instances they could, however, surpass the vihāras founded in other parts of India.

SANKARAM

The group of Buddhist monastic remains on the Sankaram hills[2] in the Vizagapatam district, which as a whole was later in date than those of Gunṭupalle, probably belonged to the Gupta period. As with several of these rock-cut retreats, the plan of this monastery had to conform to the configuration of the hill-top on which it was situated. Thus its arrangement was irregular and scattered. The remains comprised a large number of monolithic stūpas, a series of rock-cut chambers, and the foundations of an extensive structural monastic building. Situated on the summit of the eastern hill, the main establishment at Sankaram consisted of a large rock-cut stūpa on a square base with the ruins of a capacious rectangular complex in axial relation to it. The latter was a monastery, with the monks' cells arranged round a large quadrangle, its interior measuring 150 ft. by 70 ft., within which were symmetrically disposed three apsidal buildings, evidently caitya halls. Some of the monolithic stūpas here were the largest of their kind, the main one in the front of the monastery, at its circular base being 65 ft. in diameter, but its upper part had been destroyed. Although there were indications of an early foundation on this site, it is evident that its most fllourishing state belonged to the Mahāyāna period (from circa A.C. 450) as the character of the few surviving examples of sculpture showed. There

2. One mile east of the taluk town of Anakapalla.

was the quality of coherence in the planning of this part of the scheme, with its well-proportioned monastic buildings confronting the great stūpa, but the workmanship itself was on the whole crude and unpoetic.[3]

GUNṬUPALLE

It is observed that the rock-cut retreat at Guntupalle in the Godāvarī district, about 20 miles north from Elor, might have come into existence as early as 200 B. C.[4] The Saṅghārāma situated here comprised two separate groups of chambers, the ruins of a brick-built caitya hall, and many stūpas of various sizes. No real attempt at any coordinated plan seemed to have been made in arranging the monastic cells which were crowded together, probably because other chambers were at a later date inserted in the available intervening spaces. Of the others the largest group consisted of a number of cells of quite limited dimensions—5 to 6 ft. by 7 or 8 ft. They faced south-east and at the south-west end were four cells opening from a verandah with a vaulted roof, one cell being at the left end and three behind; the central one was set 4½ ft. further back than that of the other two. Close to those were another verandah with a vaulted roof and two cells opening off it and a vaulted passage between them leading to the third cell. Next were three more cells grouped by the sides of a vaulted room about 8 ft. 6 in. by 9 ft. 6 in.; but beyond this most of the cells were almost destroyed. The only ornamentation on these caves was the "caitya-window" over the doors and some of the windows as were found in the verandah at Bedsā, with three curved lattices, and the terminal above was a circular knob.[5] Hiuen-tsang saw a great Saṅghārāma

3. Brown, Percy. Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Periods (D. B. Taraporevala sons & co. pvt. ltd., 1965 ed.), p. 36.

4. Annual Report. Archaeological Department, Southern Circle, Madras, 1916-17.

5. Fergusson, James. History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, vol. i (1967ed.), pp. 167-169.

(not far from Viṅgila) which may be identified with the Vihāra of Guntupalle. This Monastery had spacious halls, storeyed towers, balconies beautifully carved and ornamented. There was an image of Buddha, the sacred features of which had been portrayed with the utmost artistic efficiency. In front of this convent were erected two stone Stūpas, one being several hundred feet high.[6] The bhikkhus and bhikkhuṇīs there had to perform their respective duties. Even today on the hill of Guntupalle may be found the remnants of a grand Vihāra associated with numerous other rock-cut monasteries and a large pillared hall. One may still see here the monks' cells. The facade of the Monastery had one main entrance in the centre flanked by two little windows and were decorated with little horse-shoe shaped gables of the usual early Buddhist type and with simulated wooden screens, above the semi-circular door and window-frames.

AMARĀVATĪ

Of the Buddhist centres in Andhra, Amarāvatī became the most widely known. Its old name was Dhānyaghaṭa or Dhānyaghaṭaka which was also called Dhanakaṭaka and Dhānyakaṭa or Dhānyakaṭaka.[7] Here was a magnificent Sūtpa built during the Sātavāhana period. Round this Stūpa, a community of monks had settled down. Thus in course of time Amarāvatī became a famous monastic centre which was originally inhabited by the monks belonging to the Mahāsāṅghika School. But later it developed as a Mahāyānist centre. Hiuen-tsang recorded that "the people (of Amarāvatī) greatly esteem learning. The saṅghārāmas are numerous, but are mostly deserted and ruined; of those preserved, there are about twenty with 1,000 or so priests. They all study the law of the

6. Beal. S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. ii, p. 218.
7. Epigraphia Indica, vi, pp. 146-157.

Great Vehicle.[8] The Buddhist monks had here two separate establishments situated on two cliffs. The Chinese Pilgrim further wrote : "At a hill to the east of the capital was a monastery called PURVA SILA (Fu-po-shih-lo) or 'East Mountain Monastery' and at a hill to the west of the city was the AVARA SILA (A-fa-lo-shih-lo) or 'West Mountain Monastery'. These had been erected for the Buddha by a former king of the country who had made a communicating path by the river, and quarrying the rocks had formed high walls with long broad corridors contiguous with the steep sides of the hills. The local deities guarded the monasteries which had been frequented by saints and sages. During the millennium immediately following the Buddha's decease, a thousand ordinary brethren came here to spend the retreat of the rainy season. Afterwards common monks and arhats sojourned here together ; but for more than one hundred years there had not been any brethren resdent in the establishment and the visitors were deterred by the forms of wild animals which the mountain gods assumed".[9] From the Chinese account we further find that Bhāvaviveka, the great dialectician, lived here for some time in a monastery on a hill.[10] Hiuen-tsang stated that the mountain cliff, which Bhāvaviveka entered by the magical power of the Dhāraṇī Sūtras was not far from the south of the capital. A considerable number of monks who used to reside in the 'West Mountain Monastery' probably migrated to Nāgārjunakoṇḍa when the kingdom was newly established and so they were frequently mentioned in the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa inscriptions. The queen-mother Cāṃta-siri, as we will see subsequently, donated a monastery "for the acceptance of monks of the Aparaśaila (Avarasila) School".[11]

8. Beal, S. Buddhist records of the Western World, vol. ii, p. 221.
9. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, vol. ii, pp. 214-215.
10. Beal, S. Buddhist records of the Western World, vol. ii, p. 223.
11. Aparamahāvinyaseliyanaṃ parigahe.

Further in the inscription of Bāpisiriṇikā reference was made to the monks of the Aparaśailaka sect, for whose benefit something (a monastery or a caitya-ghara) was erected by her near the Mahā-cetiya. Obviously the monks of this 'West Mountain Monastery' formed a powerful section of the monk-community of Śri-parvata. According to the "Life", Hiuen-tsang stayed here for several months studying the Mūlābhidharma and other Śāstras of the Mahāsāṅghika School.[12] Tārānātha wrote that the great Monastery near Lhasa with 7,700 monks and a University with six colleges was built after the model of a monastery at Dhānyakaṭaka, the Monte Casino of the Deccan in the early centuries.[13] The geographical boundary of Amarāvatī was probably extended as far as the hills of Peddamaddur, four miles to the south-east where remains of a stūpa and a vihāra and of a few marble statues were found.[14]

NĀGĀRJUNAKOṆḌA

Nāgārjunakoṇḍa was a large valley on the right bank of the Kṛṣṇā river in the Palnāḍ Taluk of the Guntur district of the Madras Presidency. It covered an area of a little over eight square miles and was completely shut in by the surrounding hills which were the off-shoots of the Nallamalai Range in the adjoining Kurnool District. The area was dotted with numerous hillocks and mounds which represented the sites of former Buddhist monuments, mostly stūpas, caityas and vihāras. A large number of limestone pillars which were probably intended to support the monastic buildings, were also unearthed here.[15] Mr. Longhurst's excavation at the site between 1926 and 1931

12. Beal, S. (The) Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 136.

13. Indian Antiquary, vol. iv, p. 363.

14. Rea. South Indian Buddhist Antiquities, M.A.R. 1887, April, 20, p. 2.

15. Subramanian, K. R. Buddhist remains in Andhra and the history of Andhra, p. 27.

resulted in the discovery of a magnificent Stūpa (the Mahācaitya of the inscriptions), several smaller stūpas, four vihāras or monasteries, six caityas or apsidal temples, four pavilions or maṇḍapas, a palace-site and stone-built wharf. All these built of large bricks, showed that the valley was a great centre of Buddhism.[16] Among the monastic remains, however, those found in a large tract to the east of the Caitya were indeed remarkable. Here were exposed the three wings of a Vihāra with the general arrangement of five cells for each wing, each cell being on the average 9′3″ × 7′. In the centre of these wings was found a well-laid out madṇapa measuring 55 square ft. with lime-stone pillars forming five bays and with an outer facing edge by vertical cuddapah slabs over limestone mouldings, in turn placed on horizontal cuddaph slab courses, the whole supported by brick courses. A paved verandah lay on the southern wing only. There were bath-room with drain, store-rooms etc.[17] Hundreds of wonderful sculptures executed in the Amarāvatī style had also been found here. Several inscriptions on the Āyaka Pillars recorded that in the second and third centuries A.C. the entire territory, of which the capital was Vijayapurī (City of Victory), must have been one of the largest and most important Buddhist settlements in South India and enjoyed international reputation. Several monasteries were erected at this place for the accommodation of Buddhist monks of different schools coming from distant countries like Ceylon, Kashmir, Gāndhāra and China. It is interesting to note that "at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, each monastic establishment was complete in itself and contained a vihāra or dwelling place for the monks, an apsidal temple and a stūpa. On plan, the vihāra consisted of a rectangular open court-yard enclosed by a brick wall. In the centre

16. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1938, No. 71, pp. 3-4.

17. ibid, p. 15, Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1926-27, pp. 156 ff; 1927-28, pp. 113 ff.

was a square stone-paved hall with a wooden roof supported by stone pillars. All round the enclosure abutting onto outer wall was a row of cells for the monks often with a verandah in front. Some of the cells were used as store-rooms, a few as shrines and there was usually one large room which served as a refectory".[18] In the east and north of Vijayapurī which was located in the western section of the valley on the right bank of the Krishnā, was an extensive out-lying plateau called ŚRĪ-PARVATA where Nāgārjuna the great took his resort in the last part of his life.[19] Though there was no reference to Nāgārjuna in any of the inscriptions discovered in the locality, the name Nāgārjunakoṇḍa (Hill of Nāgārjuna) lends strong support to its association with that great scholar. The Tibetan tradition also recorded that Nāgārjuna spent his last days in a monastery on the Śrīparvata. There are still traces of a large ruined monastery and a small Stūpa on the Cūḷa-Dhammagiri. The ruins have yielded some interesting relics and a dozen earthenware pots and bulbs. It was said in the Bodhi-Śrī inscription that "Srī-Parvata was conveniently situated on the east side of the adjacent city Vijayapurī."[20] Ikṣvāku kings set up the citadel town of Vijayapurī, carved out of Srī-Parvata, with a ghaṭ (landing platform) on the river Krishnā. Within the city-limits of Vijayapurī we notice no Buddhist relics, save an ancient monastery, recognizable by its sunk monks' cells which were gradually damaged and ultimately had been utilised for other purposes. Outside the city lay the extensive Śrī-parvata area that accommodated the ruins of approximately twenty-seven monasteries and twenty stūpas of which the largest was the earliest.

18. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 54 (Longhurst, A. H. The Buddhist Antiquities of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Madras Presidency, 1938), p. 9.

19. Das, S. C. ed. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, pt. i, p. 74 ; Wassillew. Der Buddhismus, vol. i, p. 220.

20. Epigraphia Indica, xx, pp. 22-23.

known as the Mahā-cetiya that was referred to in the inscriptions as "holding the holiest relics" (dhātuvara-parigahita). It was curious to note that the inscriptions found in the area did not bear the name of any royal donor as the Ikṣvāku kings of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa were not Buddhists themselves, but mentioned the names of several ladies like a queen-mother, queens and princesses of the royal family. It was, therefore, evident that while the kings belonged to the Brahmanical faith, their mothers, wives and daughters were staunch Buddhists. Their numerous donations were recorded in the Āyaka pillars. A few stray inscriptions also showed that some wealthy merchants of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa donated their riches for the service of Buddhism. Thus we find that Kumāranandin, a seṭṭhi, installed an image of Buddha in a cetiyaghara[21] and Vardhamāna, a seṭṭhivara (great merchant), made some gifts to a stūpa.

Fa-hien also heard of Śrī-Parvata or Parvata and Brahmagiri monastery and had left for us an account of the same in his Travels : "South from this 200 yojanas there is a country named Dakshina (ancient name for the Deccan), where there is a monastery (dedicated to) the bygone Kāśyapa Buddha, and which has been hewn out from a large hill of rock. It consists in all five storeys ;—the lowest, having the form of an elephant, with 500 apartments in the rock ; the second, having the form of a lion, with 400 apartments ; the third, having the form of a horse, with 300 apartments ; the fourth having the form of an ox, with 200 apartments ; and the fifth, having the form of a pigeon (?), with 100 apartments. At the very top there is a spring, the water of which, always in front of the apartments in the rock, goes round among the rooms, now circling, now curving, till in this way it arrives at the lowest storey, having followed the shape of the structure, and flows out there at the door. Everywhere in the apartments of the monks,

21. Indian Archaeology (1956-57), pp. 36 and 39.

the rock has been pierced so as to form windows for the admission of light, so that they are all bright, without any being left in darkness. At the four corners of the (tiers of) apartments, the rock has been hewn so as to form steps for ascending to the top (of each). The men of the present day, being of small size, and going up step by step, manage to get to the top; but in a former age they did so at one step. Because of this, the monastery is called PĀRĀVATA (?), that being the Indian name for a pigeon (?). There are always Arhats residing in it. The country about is (a tract of) uncultivated hillocks, without inhabitants."[22] Fa-hien's Po-lo-yu represents the Sanskrit word PARVATA 'mountain' and not PĀRĀVATA 'pigeon', as some thought so. He may probably heard about the Parvata or Śrī-Parvata Monastery and his description is quiet in keeping with that of the Mahāvihāra on Śrī-Parvata.[23] But during the period when Hiuentsang visited the Andhra country, we find that the Mahāvihāra, the Mahācaitya and other similar structures were already in a state of utter ruin. The Chinese Pilgrim from a distance observed Vijayapurī and Śrī-Parvata monasteries and recorded that the place was entirely a waste without either a priest or novice residing in it. That Śrī-Parvata was the proper name was proved by the Tibetan literature.[24] In the inscription of Bodhi-siri mention was made of two Vihāras called KULAHA VIHĀRA and SIHALA VIHĀRA which were situated in the vicinity of Śrī Parvata. From one of the Āyaka khamba inscriptions at the Mahācaitya we find that the former monastery (i.e. Kulaha) owed his existence to the patronage of a feudatory family.[25] The Sihala Vihāra, on the

22. Legge., J. A. Record of Buddhistic kingdoms, ch. xxxv., pp. 96-97.

23. Krishnarao, B. V. (A) History of the early dynasties of Andhradeśa, p. 88.

24. Archaeological Survey of Southern India, i, p. 7.

25. Epigraphia Indica, xx, p. 18.

other hand, was probably erected by either the Ceylonese Buddhists or the local inhabitants for the benefit of the bhikkhus and bhikkhuṇīs hailing from Siṃhala (Ceylon). This Monastery consisted of two separate edifices, one for the monks and the other for the nuns and contained a shrine for the Bodhi tree (Sihalavihāre Bodhirukha-pāsādo). The Sihala Vihāra, thus, had set up a glowing example of the friendly relation between the Indian and Ceylonese Buddhists. The local tradition related that Śaṅkarācārya, the great reformer of Brahmanical religion of the 9th century A.C., reached Nāgārjunakoṇḍa with his followers and destroyed the Buddhist monuments completely.[26]

As regards the general plan of the Buddhist monastic buildings of the Andhaka School at Srī-Parvata we find that the Saṅghārāma here was a unit of five edifices consisting of a Stūpa with altars on four cardinal sides and a pradakṣiṇapatha round about it. In front of the Stūpa were built two caitya-gṛhas, one on the left and another on the right side of it. There was also the Śilāmāṇḍapa, on three of which was the catus-sālās. It was found that the left caitya-gṛha was the dagoba-caitya, while the right one was the Buddha-Caitya.[27] Built on the standardized pre-Gupta pattern with shrine, quadrangle and monks' cells arranged along the sides, the improvement became visible as the quadrangle was often roofed and converted into a pillared maṇḍapa and the shrine was so placed as to face and dominate it. During the 3rd century A.C. the monastic organisation at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa reached a very prosperous state, as was evident from the ruins of numerous monasteries scattered with the five to six miles periphery of the Śrī-Parvata area. Most of these vihāras were, however, rebuilt during the Ikṣvāku period under the munificent patronage of the royal ladies and wealthy merchants. The Nāgārjunakoṇḍa Vihāras, unlike the North Indian ones,

26. Longhurst. Buddhist Antiquities of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, p. 6.

27. Krishnarao, B. V. (A) History of the early dynasties of the Andhradeśa, p. 99.

did not enjoy any land-grants due to probably the paucity of extra lands in this mountain-valley. Yet they lacked no support or patronage. From the extensive ruins it is obvious that the central monastic establishment of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa was a great building that is traceable at present only by its ground-plan, with two extensive wings, set within a circuit- wall. This central establishment was of noble proportions and was unique as it combined in a single unit a monastery, a nunnery (bhikkhuṇīvihāra) which was identified by its arrangements for privacy regarding doorways and bathrooms, double shrines erected in a line for housing a stūpa and an image of Buddha and a hospital recognizable by an inscription on one of its walls, viz, mukhya jvarālaya or main room for sufferers from fever. All these showed that the whole establishment was planned to accommodate a monastic university.

Mr. A. H. Longhurst in his treatise had specially said about three monasteries excavated at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.[28] Observing their respective features he made the following remark. According to him the plan of the MonasteryI built by Boddhi-siri for the use of Ceylonese monks was "somewhat irregular on the north-western side indicating that the builders of the structure were not particularly expert." It might be that the wooden roof over the cells was covered with thatch. A large number of small lead coins of the usual Āndhra type of about the second century A.C. were found in one of the cells of this monastery. The presence of these coins, a lump of lead ore and an earthenware die for the manufacture of coins indicated that the monks made their own coins. The Monastery II situated on nothern end of Nāharāḷḷaboḍu Hill was "a small but well-arranged vihāra" (built in circa A. C. 200). Its courtyard included two apsidal temples facing each other,

28. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 54 (Longhurst, A. H. The Buddhist Antiquities of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Madras Presidency, 1938), pp. 9-11.

the usual central hall, and a row of cells and rooms all round the enclosure. On the east side an entrance would lead into a second open courtyard containing a long building abutting onto the eastern wall. That structure which was probably the refectory had a stone seat all round the room and a big stone table outside the door-way. There was a long stone bench built against the west wall on the opposite side of the enclosure. On the south side were two cells or store-rooms, a kitchen, a small lavatory in the northern corner of the enclosure and a stūpa erected close to this monastic dwelling. The Monastery III was situated at the foot of Nāgārjuna's Hill. It was also a fairly big vihāra and a had a spacious monastic hall supported by pillars. This and other halls were erected by pious donors and used as rest-houses for pilgrims and visitors.

GOA

That Buddhist monasteries flourished in and around Goa during the sixth century A. C. was proved by the discovery of the Hire-Guṭṭi (North Kanara district) plates which recorded an endowment to a Buddhist monastery by Aśankita, a Bhoja King, of Goa. Likewise, the discovery of Buddhist relics of a somewhat later period in the village of Mushir in the Goa district testified to the fact that Buddhism continued to flourish there for a considerable time. We also find that the bhikkhus in Goa at the time of the Kadamba king Jayakeśin, were referred to in the Dvyāśraya-kāvya of the twelfth century.

VANAVĀSĪ

The Mahāvaṃsa recorded that after the Third Buddhist Council the elder Rakkhita was sent to Vanavāsī and that sixty thousand persons were converted, thirty-seven thousand joined the Order and fifty monastaries were established there.[29] Hiuen-tsang in the 7th century saw a large

29. Mahāvaṃsa, chap. xii. 4, 30f.; Samantapāsādikā, i, pp. 63, 66; Dīpavaṃsa, viii. 6.

Buddhist community at Vanavāsī (Koṅkanapura) and its surroundings. He visited Vanavāsī which may be identified with North Kanara situated beween the Ghāṭs, the Tuṅgabhadrā and the Varadā[30] and recorded that during his sojourn there were about 100 saṅghārāmas with 10,000 priests, who were the followers of both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna Schools. In the city itself there were two saṅghārāmas and three stūpas, with priests who were all men of distinction.[31] Hiuen-tsang saw a sandal-wood image of Maitreya, erected by the arhat Śroṇaviṁśatikoṭi in a monastery near the capital. Vanavāsī was the capital of the Kadamba dynasty (founded by Mayuravarman) upto the sixth century when it was overthrown by the Chalukyas.[32] But later probably due to stronger influences of Jainism and Brahmanism, the Buddhist monasteries here faced extreme hard days and ultimately declined.

BEḶAGĀMI

An inscription dated 1065 A.C. recorded that the daṇḍanāyaka Rūpabhaṭṭayya made a grant of land to the gods Keśava, Lokeśvara and Buddha at the city of Beḷagāmi.[33] Another epigraphic record of 1067 A.C. mentioned that there was a Buddhist teacher of the name of "...prabha Bauddha-Bhalara" at Beḷagāmi.[34] Further an inscription dated 1129 A.C. recorded that there existed five maṭhas in the agrahāra city of Beḷagāmi "like the five arrows in the world", dedicated respectively to Hari, Hara, Kamalaśāsana, Vītaraya and Buddha.[35] All these

30. Dey, Nundo Lal. (The) Geographical dictionary of ancient and mediaeval India (London, Luzac & Co., 1927), p. 21.

31. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, ii, pp. 254-255.

32. Moraes, George M. The Kadamba Kula : A History of ancient and mediaeval Karnataka (Bombay, B. X. Furtado & Sons, 1931) pp. 255-256.

33. Epigraphia Carnatica, by Lewis Rice, vii, Sk. 170.

34. ibid, Sk.. 169.

35. ibid, Sk., 100.

epigraphic records showed that there were some Buddhist monasteries at Beḷagāmi in ancient Karṇāṭaka.[36]

ḌAMBĀḶ

An inscription dated S. 1017 (A.C. 1095) recorded that a temple of the Buddhist goddess, Tārā, and a Buddhist monastery were erected at a place called Ḍambāḷ in the Dharwar district by the sixteen devout merchants during the reign of Lakṣmīdevī, the queen of Vikramāditya VI, over the district of eighteen agrahāras. Aother temple of Tārā was also built at the place by Saṅgaramaya, a merchant, of Lokkiguṇḍi. All these showed that there was a great Buddhist monastic establishment at the ancient site of Ḍambāḷ in Karṇāṭaka.

KĀÑCĪPURA

Buddhism also flourished at Kāñcīpura[37] which was situated near modern Conjeevaram, the capital of Drāviḍa or Coḷa on the river Palar, forty-three miles south-west of Madras.[38] From this place Buddhist monks used to leave for Ceylon. So it is quite possible that Kāñcīpura once accommodated a Buddhist colony.[39] It with its RĀJA-VIHĀRA and about hundred other monasteries became a famous centre of Buddhism. Many renowned scholars dwelt here. Buddhaghosa is said to have written the Monorathapuraṇī, a commentary, at this place at the request of Venerable Jotipāla. Hiuen-tsang in the 7th century saw the Kāñcīpura Monastery with its library containing the Yoga texts.[40] He mentioned a certain Dharmapāla, a great philosopher, from Kāñcī as being a great teacher at Nālandā. Dhānyabhadra, a son of the

36. Moraes, George M. The Kadamba Kula : A History of ancient and mediaeval Karnataka (1931 ed.), p. 256.

37. Indian Antiquary, 44. p. 127.

38. Law, B. C. Historical geography of ancient India, pp. 161-162.

39. Sastri, K. A. N. The Cholas, p. 657.

40. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, ii, p. 227.

King of Magadha and a monk, also heard at Kāñcī a sermon given by a Buddhist monk on the Kāraṇḍavyūha-sutra.[41] This place was a famous seat of learning and well-known for its reputed teachers. Scholars from even Ceylon used to come here to study the scriptures.

NAGAPATAM

Nagapatam, on the coast, 170 miles south from Madras, had a Buddhist settlement during the reign of the Choḷas. Dhammapāla, the celebrated Buddhist commentator, in the epilogue of his commentary on the Netti-pakaraṇa mentioned the Dharmāśoka-Vihāra, situated at this place, where he composed his commentary. A well-known copper-plate grant of the 11th century A.C. related that the Coḷa king Rājarāja donated the whole village known as Anaimangalam to the CŪLĀMAṆIVARMA VIHĀRA which the Śailendra king, Māravijayayottung Varman of Śrī-Vijaya and Kaṭāha of Indonesia, had built at Nagapatam. This grant was supplemented by a fresh gift during the reign of Kutottunga I (A.C. 1070-1120), on a representation made by the king of Kaḍāram through his ambassadors. A Burmese Inscription of the 15th century mentioned a visit to Nagapatam by some Buddhist priests from Pegu.[42] In the Vaiṣṇava legends it may further be found that Tirumangai Āḷvār dispoiled the Buddhist Vihāra of Nagapatam. We are further told that a solid golden image of Buddha of this Vihāra was utilised to meet the funds required for building the great Raṅganātha Temple at Śrī-raṅgam. But even in the 12th century Nagapatam was still a flourishing seat of Buddhism and attracted popular attention by its wealth and influence.[43]

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41. Melanges Chinois et bouddhiques, vol. i (1931-32), pp. 355-376 (Waley, Arthur. New light on Buddhism in mediaeval India).

42. Fergusson, James, History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, vol. i (1967 ed.), p. 206.

43. Sastri, K, A, Nilakanta. The Cholas, vol. ii. part i, (University of Madras, 1937), p. 508.

VAÑJI

The literary evidences showed that ancient Kerala in the south was a great seat of Buddhism. In the Manimekalai, a Buddhist work par excellence, we find that while Manimekalai, the heroine, was wandering in the city of Vañji entered the "Vihāra of the Buddhas as beautiful as the Aindira Vihāra at Kaveri Pattinam where the residents listened to the exposition of the teachings of the Buddha."[44] It was said that Manimekalai saw among the Buddhist monks at the Vihāra of Vañji her grand-father, i.e. Kovalan's father, who told her the story about the establishment of that great Monastery which was built by the "ninth ancestor of Kovalan" who was an intimate friend of the Chera king. The story ran as follows : "Once on a former occasion when the great Chera king, the ruler of the Kuttavar, who planted his emblem of the bow on the Himālayas, with the ladies of the household entered this grove and remained here in the pleasance for recreation a few 'Dharma charaṇas' who having worshipped the hill Samnoli in the island of Laṅkā and passing round in circumambulation made up their minds to get down to earth as the time for setting the king on the good path had come. Seeing them on this rock he offered worship to them as a result of previous good deeds and washing their feet in due form offered to them food prepared of 'the four kinds and six flavours.' Having done this he praised their condescension and offered them worship with due hospitality along with his whole court. On that occasion these holy ones expounded to him the sufferings of birth and the joys of ceasing to be born and thus implanted into his mind the Four Truths of the first teacher of Dharma. Then the ninth ancestor of Kovalan's father, being an intimate friend of the Chera king had also the benefit of the instruction as a result of the accumulated merit of his good deeds. Distributing among the

44. Manimekalai, ch. 28.

needy all the ancestral wealth that he inherited and all that he himself had added to it, he erected for the Sugata (Buddha) the Chaitya (Vihāra) of brilliant white stucco with its turrets reaching to the skies."[45] The above description showed that the Buddhist Vihāra at Vañji must have been a grand establishment which was famous all over South India. Buddhist monks from different parts of Tamil land flocked there. "It was erected," as Kovalan's father himself said, "in order that those that live in this world might visit it and destroy the evil attaching to them."[46] We further found that many holy bhikkhus who had left Kāncī due to the famine there had settled down in the Buddhist Monastery at Vañji. The incidence showed that the place was a popular resort for the Buddhist monks. But as ill-luck would have it, no extant relics relating to this Vihāra had been found out. It must have been situated on a site, hitherto neglected to some extent, in and near modern Cranganore.[47]

ŚRĪ MŪLAVĀSAM

Another important Buddhist centre in Kerala was Śrī Mūlavāsam where was erected a famous Buddhist Vihāra. Sri Gopinath Rao located Śrī Mūlavāsam in Central Travancore, near Tirukunnapula or Ambalapula, on the sea-coast, because "all the Buddha images are found in Central Travancore." But some scholars again thought that Śrī Mūlavāsam must have been situated somewhere in North Malabar.[48] P. C. Alexander said that Śrī Mūlavāsam was a flourishing Buddhist centre in the territories of the ancient Kolathunadu princes.[49] We found a reference to this place in the famous Buddhist inscription

45. Manimekalai, Book 28, l. 131.

46. ibid, l. 132.

47. Alexander, P. C. Buddhism in Kerala, (Annamalai University, 1949), p. 41.

48. Travancore Archaeological Series, ii, p. 117.

49. Alexander, P. C. Buddhism in Kerala, p. 84.

of king Vikramadithia Varaguna of the Venadu dynasty (A.C. 868). Varaguna who was an ardent devotee of Buddha had granted extensive landed property to the monastic establishment of Śrī Mūlavāsam. This epigraphic record mentioned the name of the donee of the grant as Bhaṭṭāraka of Tirumulapatham.[50] The influence of the Śrī Mūlavāsam Monastery was felt from very early times in places as far from it as Gāndhāra. The Musikavaṃsaṃ[51] clearly recorded that this Buddhist Vihāra was in great danger of being washed out by the sea. It was said that king Vikrama saved it from the encroachment of the sea by throwing large stone-blocks. Another king named Valabha built the Buddhist shrine at Śrī Mūlavāsam, worshipped the Lord of the temple and obtained the blessings of the Buddhist monks who dwelt there.[52] The Śrī Mūlavāsam Vihāra might have been in a very prosperous state during the close of the 9th century A.C. It must have been destroyed in or about the first quarter of the 11th century probably due to external aggression.

TALAPPALLY

Buddhist cave-monasteries were also flourished at KAKKAD, CHOWANNUR, ARIKANNIYUR, EYYAL and KATTAKAMPALLY in Talappally taluk of the Cochin area. These caves were cut in laterite on the level ground. Each of them had an entrance-porch of about 5 feet long, 4 feet broad and 4 feet deep, with a circular entrance of about two feet diameter, to the cave. It was to be noted that the caves in this area having beds inside were distinctly discernible, which proved that all these cave-monasteries at Talappally were intended to house the Buddhist monks.[53]

Among other monasteries in South India mention may

50. Travancore Archaeological Series, vol. i, p. 189.

51. Sarga, xii.

52. Musikavamsam, Sarga xiv.

53. The Maha Bodhi, vol. 72, No. 5, 142 (Raghavan, K. Buddhist Relics in Kerala)

be made of those located in Bhaṭṭiprolu, Jagayyapeta, Gusiwada, Ghantaśāla and many other places. From the inscriptions discovered at BHAṬṬIPROLU, situated on the railway in the Guntur District, we found that the Buddhist monks here were divided into committees. This showed that the place was one of the earliest centres of Buddhism in Andhra and that there was a-settlement for Buddhist monks.[54] There was also existed a great Buddhist monastic establishment at JAGAYYAPETA ,which was situated in the Nandigama Taluk of the Krishna District and which was one of the earliest centres of Buddhism in Andhra. Here some inscriptions of Mauryan characters of the second century B. C. had been found on the remains of base-slabs of the Great Stūpa (Mahācaitya).[55] Buddhist stūpas and vihāras were also constructed at Ghantaśāla, situated thirteen miles west of Masulipatnam, during the second century B. C. The ruins of a large Vihāra were found at ARUGOLANU, located in Tadipalliguden Taluk of West Godāvarī District, where subsequently grew up a Buddhist city of vast size. There was also a Vihāra at DAṆḌAPURĪ, where Buddhapālita taught the Prāsaṅga School of Buddhism.[56] At RĀMATĪRTHAM, situated eight miles north-east of Viziangram on the South Eastern Railway and about four miles from Nellimarala, in Andhradeśa the traces of a Monastery had also been found. This Saṅghārāma had rows of cells with small niches on the walls for keeping lamps, and rows of massive stone pillars indicating the existence there of a large hall in the past.[57] From the inscriptions on the walls of the ARITTAPATTY and KAZHUKUMALA caves, both

54. Subramanian, K. R. Buddhist remains in Andhra and the history of Andhra, p. 27.

55. Chaudhuri, B. N. Buddhist Centres in Ancient India (Calcutta, Sanskrit College. 1969), p. 255.

56. Das, S. C. ed. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, i, p. 94.

57. Subramanian, K. R. Buddhist remains in Andhra and the history of Andhra, p. 28.

cut in granite rocks in the Madura district, on the borders of Kerala state, in Madras indicated that these cave-monasteries were excavated to accommodate Buddhist monks.[58] SĀLIHUNḌAM which was situated on the south bank of the Vaṁśadhārā river and six miles west of Kaliṅgapatnam, Ganjam District, remained as a Buddhist monastic centre for several centuries beginning from the Gupta period down to the seventh century A. C. The Buddhist settlement of Sālihuṇḍam was on the summit and slopes of a very fine hill. Near Nāgārjunakoṇḍa was situated Paṇṇagāma, another important Buddhist monastic centre. Members of the Ayira Haṁgha (Ārya Saṁgha) who were preachers of the Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāyas and the Pañcamātikās used to dwelt here.[59] There was probably a cave-monastery at ARIPALAM which was situated near Anakapalle. An inscription discovered at ALLURU recorded a gift of land to a group of Buddhist monks who belonged to a Nigaya or School of Pūrvaśailas for constructing their monastic dwellings there.

We have observed in the preceeding pages how the Buddhist monasteries were regionally distributed in South India. The vihāras of Amarāvatī, Nārgārjunakoṇḍa, Śrī Mūlavāsam, Kāñcīpura and many others were really grand establishments which gradually transformed into great centres of learning—both religious and secular. They had their colourful careers throughout and reached a stage of marvellous perfection representing the classical age of Buddhist monasteries in Ancient India. Most of these monasteries were lavishly subsidised by the royal authorities. Naturally as financial security was assured, the monastic authorities found enough scope and privilege to organise their monasteries as prominent seats of learning.

58. Iyer, S. Sanku. Kerala and Buddhism, pp. 11-12.
59. Epigraphia Indica, vol. xx, Ins. e, p. 17.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters we have seen that with a modest beginning even during the life-time of Buddha, vihāras had passed through several stages of vicissitudes. They owed their appearance mainly to the evangelical spirit of the bhikkhus and bhikkhuṇīs. In the subsequent period many lay-devotees also upheld the cause of Buddhism and monasteries. Thus with such a popular backing ancient India offered good opportunities for religious zeal, monastic discipline and study, and consequently for the growth of sundry Buddhist monasteries with their store-houses of invaluable and extremely rare manuscripts.

CAUSES OF GROWTH

Various factors played their respective roles in the emergence and subsequent development of Buddhist monasteries in ancient India. All these being equally important made the work of establishing monasteries here easy and convenient. Throughout the ages all such factors remained more or less same giving birth to numerous monastic abodes which in course of time changed into educational institutions with all the characteristies of 'residential universities.'

It is an accepted fact that no organisation may prosper, however excellent it may be, without the support of the ruling powers and nobility of the time. The records of the gifts to the various Buddhist monasteries may be found in many inscriptions available throughout the length and breadth of this country. The kings, nobles and even the common people came forward to shoulder the burden of the expenses for the construction as well as maintenance of these monasteries. They took the work of erection of vihāras as their sacred duty. Thus beginning from Bimbisāra, the king, many renowned emperors, feudatory chiefs, provincial governors spent a considerable portion of their revenue for the cause of Buddhist vihāras. But among them Aśoka's zeal and enthusiasm for Buddhist monks and monasteries stood unparallel. As a staunch follower of Buddhism, he conferred liberal gifts upon the monastic establishments of the Buddhists. This attracted many non-Buddhists to the Buddhist Saṅgha. It is said that "more than the builder of cities is Aśoka the builder of monasteries or stūpas."[1] In the Mahāvaṁsa we find that once the emperor asked his preceptor, Moggaliputta Tissa : "How great is the content of the Dhamma taught by the Master ?" The reply was : "There are 84,000 sections of the Dhamma." Aśoka said : "Each one of them will I honour with a Vihāra." So he caused 84,000 vihāras to be built by all his subordinate kings in 84,000 towns selected all over India, including the Aśokan Monastery erected by himself at Pāṭaliputra. But Fa-hien recorded that "Aśoka wished to destroy the eight (i. e. those built over Buddha's bodily remains distributed at his demise among eight different clans), and to build instead of them 84,000 topes on the theory that the bones of the human body comprised 84,000 atoms."[2] Hiuen-tsang, on other hand, made definite mention of more

1. **Mookerji, R. K. Asoka, p. 78.**
2. **Legge, J, (A) Record of Buddhistic kingdom, p, 69.**

than 80 stūpas and vihāras associated with Aśoka, besides the 500 vihāras of Kashmir and other large groups of same in different localities. But the archaeological excavations, conducted so far, ascribed only few stūpas and vihāras to Aśoka. However from numerous epigraphic and literary evidences it was obvious that this emperor was a great builder of Buddhist monasteries. Kaniṣka, the the Kuṣāṇa emperor, also founded many monasteries and caityas. Harṣavardhana, the son of Mahārājādhirāja Prabhākara Vardhana, was himself a Buddhist and a patron of the Nālandā Mahāvihāra where he erected a vihāra and a bronze temple.[3] The Gupta as well as the Pāla rulers also played a wonderful part in the spread of Buddhism and establishment of monasteries. Inspite of the perilous condition of Buddhism in the twelfth century, there were endeavours at revival and as a consequence new monasteries were founded and old ones endowed afresh to keep up the monastic life. But the most noteworthy of these revivalist efforts was associated with Govindacandra, a king (A. C. 1114—1154) of the Gahavala dynasty and his virtuous Buddhist queen Kumaradevī. Probably Govindacandra wanted to revive the tradition of patronage to Buddhism set by Harṣavardhana, an illustrious Buddhist King of Kanauj. Further we find that Jayacandra (circa A. C. 1170), another king of the same Gahadvala dynasty, had left an inscription at Bodh-Gayā, which began "with an invocation to the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas and the king's own religious preceptor, a monk named Śrīmitra" and recorded the construction at a place called Jayapura of a guhā, i.e. cave-monastery.[4] A later inscription of the reign of a "king" named Asokacalla was discovered in a hill-region, formerly called Saptadalākṣa near Gayā. It recorded the erection of a monastery by Bhaṭṭa Ḍāmodara at the

3. Watters. On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, ii, p. 171.

4. Mitra R. C. Decline of Buddhism in India (Visva-Bharati, 1954), p. 42.

request of some royal officers who were probably Buddhists.[5] Thus many earnest attempts were made for some years to revive Buddhism and establish new monasteries even after the Muslim invaders had overrun Northern India. Besides the royal authorities numerous notable citizens also spent a lot of money for the construction of the Buddhist monastic abodes during the early as also the late periods. Among them Anāthapiṇḍika, Jīvaka, Viśākhā, Ambapālī and many others were noteworthy. Turning to the Andhra Country we find that the principal founder of the innumerable institutions at Śrī-Parvata was the Princess Mahātālavari Mahāsenāpatni Mahādānapatni Śānti Śrī, a paternal aunt and mother-in-law of king Śrī Vīrapuruṣadatta. In one of the Āyaka-khamba inscriptions in the Mahācaitya here, it was distinctly stated that in the sixth year of the reign of Māṭhariputra Śrī Vīrapuraṣadatta, she re-erected the Mahācaitya and the Mahāvihāra on Śrī Parvata and set up Āyaka-Khambas in each of the four cardinal directions.[6] It was further stated in another inscription that while tha re-erection of the Mahācaitya was undertaken by the pious Lady Śānti Śrī (Cāṁti Siri) the construction was directed by the monk-architect, the illustrious Bhadanta, Ācārya Ānanda, who knew the Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāyas by heart and who was a disciple of the Ācāryas of the Ayira Haṁgha (Ārya Saṁgha), who were residents in Paṇṇagāma and the preceptors and preachers of the Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāyas and of the Pañcamātikās.[7] These and many other inscriptions found in all parts of India showed that Buddhist monasteries grew up under the loving patronage of such royal, noble and common people. The Buddhist monastic establishments in ancient India, therefore, flourished most because of monks' ability

5, Ibid, p. 43.
6. Epigraphia Indica, xx, Ins. C. 1. C2.B5, p. 5.
7. ibid. Insc. C. I,, p. 17. (Additional passage in C. 1).

in enlisting sympathy and patronage of kings, nobles and clans.

The art of preaching the religion (i.e, Buddhism) also became instrumental to the erection and organisation of Buddhist monastic abodes. The monks because of their religious ideals used to dedicate their lives to the propagation of the faith, adopt and cultivate this art. As a result many monasteries were founded and in order to educate the novice-monks there occurred an urgent necessity for keeping collections of books in every monastery for easy reference as well as for serious study.

But the inner urge and enthusiasm of the Buddhist monks and nuns for permanent places of residence played the most important role, at the earliest period of Buddhism, in the erection of vihāras. They became tired and restless of wandering from place to place. Thus considering their anxieties and worries, especially during the rainy seasons Buddha allowed his disciples to have a place of residence at least for a temporary period. These temporary abodes, as times went on, became more or less permanent places of residence. Thus was the beginning of the Buddhist monasteries amidst their sylvian surroundings.

CAUSES OF DESTRUCTION

We shall, next, proceed to examine briefly the causes which led to the destruction of Buddhist vihāras in ancient India. One of the causes behind the complete dissolution of the Buddhist monasteries in this country was the degeneracy and demoralisation which had later crept into the Buddhist monks who had previously raised their accusing fingers at the corruption and moral deterioration of the Brahman priestly class and had subsequently become guilty of the same offence in a worse degree. "The modest, pious and energetic wandering monks of the early days become in course of time ignorant and do-nothing priests attached to opulant monasteries and instead of passionately preaching and appealing to the human heart, the later

monks indulged in gerund-grinding and logic-chopping and in debasing Tantric practices."[8] The conquering zeal of the early centuries had died out and all boldness and true originality of thought had disappeared. As a consequence the monastic life almost collapsed and the inmates of the monasteries were then at little urge for maintaining their institutions. Thus the intellectual power was exhausted in scholastic discussion or lulled to sleep in the midst of the idle routine and a time appeared when it ceased to even give birth to treasures of manuscripts. As the great edifice of monastic life crumbled down, naturally the monks felt little demand for maintaining vast collections of ancient texts in safe custody. Hence gradually, as time rolled on, even the well-established and properly organised monasteries began to pass into oblivion for sheer neglect and lack of previous enthusiasm.

Religious persecution was probably the most potent factor that led to the destruction of Buddhist monasteries which thrived under the protective wings of imperial patronage. But at the later age due to lack of it, these became helpless victims of religious fanaticism. Thus, as for example, in Bengal during the Sena period, Buddhism suffered a natural setback as the kings were strong supporters of orthodox Brahmanical principles. The period beginning with the sixth and ending with the tenth century A. C. was characterised by a great revival of Brāhmanism, which shook the non-Vedic sects to their very foundation.[9] Such a revival manifested itself in two great religious movements, viz, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, which enveloped whole India. The Brāhmanical persecution was not sustained and persistent, but "broke out in periodic or local ebullitions of frenzy till Buddhism was overpowered and hounded out of

8. Sathinatha Iyer, R, College text-book of Indian history, p. 360.
9. Alexander, P. C. Buddhism in Kerala, p. 180.

the land of its origin."[10] Thus, Pusyamitra had been thwarted in his attempt at the destruction of the Kukkuṭārāma of Aśoka at Pāṭaliputra by the roar of a lion. He had destroyed the monasteries at Sākala in East Punjab and offered a reward of 100 Dināras for the head of every Buddhist.[11] Śaśāṅka of Karṇasuvarṇa was also accused of having expelled the residents of a vihāra at Kuśīnagara[12], thrown to the Ganges a relic-stone bearing the foot-prints of Buddha at Pāṭaliputra and of having uprooted the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya and attempted to remove an image of Buddha replacing it by that of Śiva. Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa also threatened the Buddhist monks of Nālandā with a behaviour simiiar to that of Śaśāṅka, and with the destruction of the whole monastery unless Hiuen-tsang was preemptorily despatched to his court.[13] The persecution by king Sudhanvan of Ujjayinī[14] at the instigation of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa was mentioned in the "Saṅkara-Dīgvijaya" (I & V) ascribed to Mādhava, and "Saṅkara-Vijaya" ascribed to Ānanda-Giri. In the "Kerāla-Utpatti" also we find that the Buddhists were driven out from Kerāla by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.[15] There is evidence to show that the Śaiva Nayanars throughout the Tamil country carried on a terrible crusade against the Buddhists and the Jainas. Thus through the result of the proselytising nature of Brāhmanism on the one hand and its terribie re-action on the other both the Buddhist and Jaina monasteries faced extreme hard days.

The Hūṇa-invasion in the north-western India during the fifth and the sixth centuries also offered a cruel blow to the monasteries in Northern India. Sung-yun, a Chinese Pilgrim, who was sent on an official mission to India by an

10. Mitra, R. C. The Decline of Buddhism in India (Visva-Bharati, 1954), p. 125.
11. Sastri, N. K. History of India, pp. 96-97.
12. Watters. On Yuan Chwang, vol. ii, p. 43.
13. Beal, S. Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, p. 171.
14. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1898, p. 208.
15. Menon, P. History of Kerala. vol. i, p. 453 fn. 1.

empress of the Wei dynasty, having arrived in Gāndhāra in A.C. 520 saw the country destroyed by the Hūṇas,[16] a nomadic people from Central Asian Steppes. About a hundred years later between A. C. 630-631 another Chinese Pilgrim, Hiuen-tsang passing through Gāndhāra and Kashmir heard about the destruction caused by Mihirakula, a Hūṇa-chief. It was then a current tale in these parts of the country. The work of devastation spread probably as far as Kosambī, though it particularly affected Gāndhāra and Kashmir. Toramāna who was responsible for the consolidation of the Hūṇas was succeeded in about 515 A.C. by his son Mihirakula who was notorious for his wickedness and cruelty and called 'Trikoṭihantṛ'—the killer of three crores. Inspired, perhaps, by the example of his great Buddhist predecessors like Menander and Kaniṣka, Mihiarakula also wanted to devote his leisure-period to the study of Buddhism. He, therefore, ordered the Buddhist Saṅgha to suggest a capable monk to be his teacher. The distinguished monks of the day declined this high honour as they were afraid of the king's stren nature ; and others declined it for fear of being found out as possessing little merit. Ultimately their choice fell upon one who had been a servant in the king's household. Mihirakula took this as a great insult and ordered the utter extermination of the Buddhist Saṅgha throughout the country. The harsh command evoked opposition from Bālāditya, the ruler of Magadha, at that time. So Mihirakula proceeded to invade the territory of his opponent who was a zealous Buddhist.[17] Later, Mihirakula, the "Attila of India", also attacked Gāndhāra,[18] exterminated the royal family there and destroyed sixteen hundred

16. Beal, S. Buddhist Records of the Western World, vol. i, pp. XV-XVI.

17. Ganhar, J. N. & Ganhar, P. N. Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh, pp. 48-49.

18. Dutt, S. Buddhist monks and monasteries in India, p. 206.

stūpas and saṅghārāmas with their vast collections.[19] But the destructive fury of the early Muslim conquerors who were fanatical and became bent on predatory excursions gave the lasting blow to indigenous learning and vihāras in the territories brought under their sway. This is indicated by the statement of the great Muslim scholar Al-Beruni of Ghazni: "Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country that have been conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Banaras and other places."[20] The death-blow to the Valabhī Monastery likewise came from the Tajjika (Arab) invaders. They reduced all its edifices to rubble and dust including the Maitraka monasteries. We have seen elsewhere that the Mohammadans with a sheer orthodox and narrow motive destroyed most of the celebrated seats of learning during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Hence no monasteries could protect their invaluable records from the ruthless hands of these fierce intruders. In fact it was the Muslim fanticism which practicaily blew the death-knell of the early Buddhist monasteries.

Apart from the above causes of the decline of monasteries in India, there were other reasons also for such an unwanted happening. And all the major causes associated with the minor ones hastened the dissolution of Buddhist monasteries. But such a tale of destruction is indeed pathetic!

19. Brown, Percy. Indian Architecture : Buddhist and Hindu Periods (1965 ed), p. 34.

20. Sachau's translation, vol. i, p. 22.

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